

United States Senate

COMMITTEES:
RANKING MEMBER:
SMALL BUSINESS AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP
ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS
HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR, AND PENSIONS
RANKING MEMBER:
SUBCOMMITTEE ON PRIMARY HEALTH AND
RETIREMENT SECURITY
COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION
CHAIR:
U.S. SENATE CLIMATE CHANGE TASK FORCE

October 30, 2025

Michael D. Citren, Chairman
Stephen D. Smith, President
ACECO LLC
901 Stoddard Place
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Dear Mr. Citren and Mr. Smith:

As the contractor handling the demolition of the East Wing of the White House, ACECO should have complied with applicable health and safety requirements intended to protect its workers and the public from exposure to hazardous materials, including from the release of asbestos-laden demolition debris and dust without proper containment. ACECO's refusal thus far to answer basic questions about permits and safety protocols raises serious concerns about whether your firm has complied with the law—or gambled with people's health. The demolition of a structure of the age and historic national significance of the East Wing demands the highest possible standards of care, not the lowest bid and a blind eye toward regulation. I write seeking an answer to the question of whether ACECO cut health and safety corners on the White House East Wing demolition and, in doing so, placed its own workers and the public at risk of exposure to asbestos and other hazardous materials.

The East Wing, constructed in 1902 and first expanded in 1942, has served for decades as workspace for First Ladies and White House staff.¹ Its age and construction era make it overwhelmingly likely that asbestos-containing materials, lead-based paint, and other hazardous substances were present. Experts at the Asbestos Disease Awareness Organization have warned that “there is a real possibility” that a building of this vintage has asbestos in insulation, flooring, and pipe wrap used for fire retardation and other purposes.² Yet, photographs and videos available online, as well as witness accounts, suggest the East Wing was torn apart at speed without containment systems, dust

¹ Dan Diamond et al., *White House expands East Wing demolition as critics decry Trump overreach*, Wash. Post (Oct. 21, 2025), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2025/10/21/white-house-continues-east-wing-demolition-amid-cries-trump-overreach/>.

² Press Release, White House East Wing Demolition Raises Alarms Over Transparency of Asbestos Protections and Worker Safety, Asbestos Disease Awareness Organization (Oct. 22, 2025), <https://www.asbestosdiseaseawareness.org/newsroom/blogs/release-white-house-east-wing-demolition/>.

suppression, or even sufficient personal protective equipment for workers, raising the specter of uncontained contaminants spreading across the White House grounds.³

Damaged asbestos fibers are one of the most hazardous substances that can arise from construction demolition. Unless their presence is disclosed, individuals have no way of knowing that the air may contain tiny, tasteless and odorless fibers that cause no noticeable irritation but can be deadly. Construction workers on the East Wing site, nearby office workers and tourists, and passersby could now be at heightened risk of developing lung cancer, asbestosis, or mesothelioma from the inhalation of demolition dust.

ACECO's work falls squarely within a network of federal regulations governing demolition, hazardous-material handling, and worker protection. The Occupational Health and Safety Administration's (OSHA) asbestos standard requires that employers identify, monitor, and control asbestos exposure in demolition work.⁴ And the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) National Emission Standards for Hazardous Air Pollutants (NESHAP) rules require inspection, advance notice, and approved abatement or containment procedures before demolition of a structure containing asbestos.⁵

To help me better understand ACECO's role in the East Wing demolition and whether it complied with safety regulations, please provide written answers to the following questions by November 12, 2025:

1. When and under what authority did ACECO begin demolition work at the East Wing? What was the scope of the work? Please provide any contracts or other agreements covering the work.
2. Was a full hazardous-materials survey, including asbestos and lead, conducted prior to demolition? If so, provide the surveyor's name, date of inspection and sampling, testing reports, and findings. If not, why not?

³ Elaine Mallon, *East Wing demolition triggers backlash: Reviews shut down amid public fury against company*, National News Desk (Oct. 23, 2025), <https://thenationaldesk.com/news/americas-news-now/east-wing-demolition-triggers-backlash-aceco-shuts-down-online-presence-amid-public-fury-yelp-reviews>; John Gonzalez, *Demolition firm under fire as private donors fuel major renovation at White House*, ABC7 News (Oct. 2, 2025), <https://wjla.com/news/local/demolition-firm-under-fire-as-private-donors-fuel-major-renovation-at-white-house-aceco-silver-spring-maryland-dmv-washington-dc-donald-trump-east-wing-ballroom>.

⁴ 29 C.F.R. § 1926.1101, <https://www.osha.gov/laws-regs/regulations/standardnumber/1926/1926.1101>.

⁵ 40 C.F.R. Part 61, Subpart M, <https://www.epa.gov/asbestos/asbestos-laws-and-regulations>.

3. If asbestos was found at the East Wing site, was an abatement or containment plan implemented, including worker protection and emission controls? If so, please provide the plan and any chain-of-custody records. If not, why not?
4. Did ACECO file the required NESHAP notifications with EPA Region III? If so, please provide the documentation? If not, why not?
5. How were workers on the East Wing demolition site trained and equipped to prevent asbestos exposure? Please include copies of any contracts, safety plans, and worker training records for your company or any subcontractors performing demolition, abatement, or disposal activities.
6. Was monitoring or air-sampling at the East Wing demolition site performed? If so, please identify specific sampling locations and sampling times, as well as any results. If not, why not?
7. What permits did ACECO obtain for this work, and from which authorities? Please provide any East Wing job-site permits.
8. Describe how demolition debris and any hazardous waste have been handled, transported, and disposed of, and identify the receiving facilities. Please include any manifests, transport records, and disposal certificates for asbestos-containing material, lead paint waste, or other hazardous debris.
9. Were measures taken to prevent dust or airborne contaminants from reaching surrounding areas of the White House complex? If so, please identify them. If not, why not?
10. Were any deviations or incidents reported during demolition, and if so, what corrective action was taken?

The American people expect the “People’s House” to be treated with care, not reckless disregard for the law or the health and safety of those at or nearby the East Wing demolition site. ACECO owes Congress and the public a full accounting of its involvement in the East Wing demolition and its level of adherence to federal health and safety standards.

Sincerely,



Edward J. Markey
United States Senator