

*The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission*

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## EEOC RESPONDS TO FINAL REPORT OF MITSUBISHI CONSENT DECREE MONITORS

Commission Says Control of Sexual Harassment in Future May Depend on Auto Maker's Adoption of Recommendations

CHICAGO - The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) said that it was encouraged by the final report of the Mitsubishi Consent Decree Monitors filed today with Chief Judge Joe B. McDade of the federal District Court in Peoria, Illinois. The report is in accordance with the Consent Decree which resolved the federal agency's landmark sexual harassment case against Mitsubishi Motor Manufacturing of America (No. 96-1192). The Consent Decree, entered June 23, 1998, provided for payment of \$34 million to the victims of sexual harassment at Mitsubishi's facility in Normal, Illinois, for wide-ranging injunctive relief, and for the creation of a blue-ribbon panel of monitors to track Mitsubishi's efforts to comply with the Decree.

The \$34 million in monetary relief provided for by the Consent Decree was the largest sexual harassment settlement in the history of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The amount was distributed to more than 400 women, many of whom still work at Mitsubishi. The Decree has a three year term and, unless extended, expires June 23, 2001.

Today's final report, authored by the monitors, concludes: "Both Mitsubishi and EEOC should be extremely pleased with the overall progress Mitsubishi has made during the three years of the Consent Decree. While its program...has not been free of problems, we believe Mitsubishi has exhibited a strong commitment to preventing and controlling sexual and sex-based harassment in the workplace. Serious incidents of sexual harassment are rare."

John C. Hendrickson, regional attorney of EEOC's Chicago District Office and the leader of the agency's litigation team, said, "The report of the monitors confirms that, although our litigation and the Consent Decree did not create a perfect world at Mitsubishi, they did make a huge and positive difference in the daily work life of many women."

Hendrickson added: "By any measure, EEOC's effort in this case has been a success not only for the agency but also for the company and its employees. The test now is whether the company can maintain and build upon its success by continuing to implement the recommendations of the monitors. The future at Mitsubishi is now truly in the company's own hands. We hope it will resist complacency and back-sliding and will continue its efforts to become a model employer."

The monitor's report, while noting that Mitsubishi's "Normal plant in many ways is a different place than it was three years ago," also "remind[s] the company of the need to remain vigilant and proactive" in combating sexual harassment. In order to do so, the monitors say, the company should continue the Opportunity Programs Department, responsible for dealing with complaints of sexual harassment, and other new practices which were put in place under the Consent Decree.

The monitors state in the report: "We believe that the investigation, monitoring, tracking, enforcement and follow-up mechanisms that were established and have worked well under the Decree are necessary to prevent retrogression. We recommend that those measures remain in place. In addition, we cannot stress too strongly the continued need for the existence of an adequately staffed, adequately funded, and independent Opportunity Programs Department."

The monitors are Nancy B. Kreiter, Research Director of Women Employed in Chicago; Joyce E. Tucker, formerly an EEOC Commissioner and now a principal of Tucker Spearman & Associates in Alexandria, Virginia; and George F. Galland, Jr., a member of the Miner, Barnhill & Galland, P.C. law firm in Chicago.

John P. Rowe, director of EEOC's Chicago District Office, said, "The experience, expertise, and integrity of the Consent Decree monitors are all beyond dispute. They have worked hard to measure Mitsubishi's performance under the Decree. When they tell us that things have changed for the better at Mitsubishi, we have confidence in their assessment and are encouraged about the future for women at that plant."

Rowe continued, "We at EEOC always believed in our investigation, in our litigation, and in the Consent Decree which we were finally able to put in place with the cooperation of the company. Today's report demonstrates that our belief was well founded."

EEOC enforces Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibits employment discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, or national origin; the Age Discrimination in Employment Act, which protects workers 40 and older; the Equal Pay Act, which bars sex-based differences in compensation; the Americans with Disabilities Act, which prohibits

discrimination against qualified individuals with disabilities in the private sector and state and local governments; prohibitions against discrimination affecting persons with disabilities in the federal government; and sections of the Civil Rights Act of 1991. Further information about the Commission is available on its Web site at [www.eeoc.gov](http://www.eeoc.gov).

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