

FILE NAME: RT Vanderbilt (RTV)

DATE: 1973 Dec 12

DOC#: RTV204

DOCUMENT DESCRIPTION: Letter to Quebec Asbestos Mining Association from RTV on Definition of Fiber and Asbestos

X

R. T. VANDERBILT COMPANY, INC.

33 WINFIELD STREET
EAST NORWALK, CONNECTICUT 06855

CABLE ADDRESS
BILTVAN NEW YORK

December 12, 1973

Mr. Marcel Cossette, Director
Testing Research Laboratory
Quebec Asbestos Mining Association
Universite De Sherbrooke
Sherbrooke, Quebec J1K 2R1

Dear Marcel:

Enclosed is a set of definitions for "fiber" as well as various definitions of the word "asbestos" which contain references to the physical characteristics of naturally-occurring mineral fibers.

I am also enclosing reprints from several newspapers of articles commenting on Dr. Zussman's testimony at the recent Reserve Mining Co. trial in Duluth. If some thought is given to the matter, I believe that whole affair in Duluth could end up with the same question we are faced with in our standard setting - "What is a fiber?" And of course, the people in Duluth also must answer that question in the context of the pathological response of the mineral shapes in question.

Although we have agreed tentatively that the ASTM Designation D 2946-71T definition of a fiber can quite possibly serve our needs, mineralogists and geologists may take issue. A 10:1 ratio mineral particle resulting from the fracture of a shorter particle rather than from the shortening of a long fiber might rightfully be considered not a fiber. It can be argued that a fiber can be shortened until its aspect ratio is 3:1 and it is still a fiber, but a true fiber cannot be formed by the fracturing of a mineral particle that was not a fiber to begin with. In other words, a fiber may have to be defined by its peculiar property to "separate into fibrils" when crushed or processed.

To complicate matters, we have the case of minerals which appear fibrous to the naked eye but fracture easily into non-fibrous particles when processed commercially, and are never experienced in the workplace as anything but a non-fibrous dust. Since we are addressing ourselves to "workplace" standards, should we be concerned with the morphology of minerals as they occur in nature or as they are realistically encountered?

CRMC-MAD-000622

R. T. VANDERBILT COMPANY, INC.

Mr. Marcel Cossette, Director

- 2 -

December 12, 1973

To respond to your question of how many times per year our task-force group should meet, I would say about once a year, although it could be more frequent if the need arose.

I trust the attached information will be of assistance in your proposed letter balloting, and I hope the mails are good enough to allow this letter to reach you in time. Please call me if you need more data.

Very truly yours,

R. T. VANDERBILT COMPANY, INC.

al

Allan M. Harvey, Manager
Legal and Product Application

AMH:slb
Enclosures

cc: Mr. Albert A. Miner

CRMC-MAD-000623