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ZONOLITE
CONSTRUCTION PRODUCTS DIVISION

ASBESTOS '70

June 1, 1970

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FROM: T. F. Egan

cc: J. N. Beveridge

Gentlemen:

It is very important that each of you have a clear understanding of the issues and the course of events concerning the "asbestos" pollution.

Dr. Irving J. Selikoff, Chief-Environmental Medicine, Mt. Sinai Hospital, New York, New York, was the man who spoke out first and often at least for the public record on the dangers of asbestos. He was supported by the Asbestos Workers Union and noted the dangers in three work areas: (1) Asbestos Cement (2) Asbestos Pipe Covering (3) Sprayed Asbestos Fiber Fireproofing.

The first two area job practices were altered and conditions improved sufficiently to satisfy present requirements. However, the sprayed fiber fireproofing drew more attention. Primarily due to New York being 99% a fiber market and the terrible job practices: (1) Little if any tarping (2) No clean-up - let the breezes blow (3) Extremely low density, 4-8 P.C.F. and no tarping or sealing.

Dr. Selikoff started to speak out publicly to our knowledge in early 1969 around New York and, in fact, got the fireproofing sub-contractors and sprayed fiber manufacturers association to form a committee to set standards to improve job conditions.

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The general feeling was that he would go away if he was treated gently. But this was not to be, as he stepped up his attack speaking November 1969 to the CPLIA National Convention and other groups across the country. The pressure increased until March 1970 when Richard Ottinger, Congressman from Weschester County, New York, spoke out in a public address against the terrible danger by asbestos pollution. This was followed quickly by the April 2 issue of Engineering News Record which left little doubt that the facts were a national construction issue.

New York City appointed an Environmental Commissioner, Dr. Robert Rickles, and his group established a set of rules to control spraying of "asbestos containing" fireproofing materials. These regulations are being enforced and, in fact, jobs shutdown.

I have met with Dr.'s Selikoff and Rickles and I'm sure they intend to put an end to pollution, short and long term with materials, asbestos or other, which can in any way endanger the health of workers, office employees, and the general public. This includes during construction, after building, occupancy through air condition inhalation, or future demolition of buildings that will release asbestos or other materials into the atmosphere.

There are public hearings to be held in New York on May 27 and 28 which I will attend. Also, there are meetings scheduled for Boston, Philadelphia and San Francisco as the concern spreads. Today we were invited to Underwriters' Laboratories on June 17 to discuss this matter among all listees.

Some of this you may have heard, but I must stress the importance to keep this matter in perspective. We must know the true facts and speak them quickly and firmly when, or if, this issue is misstated.

Out of this controversy we stand to gain a great deal if we all do the right thing. That thing is to plan how.

Sincerely,

Tom jac

Thomas F. Egan

TFE/jac

Attachments: (1) Ad - N.Y. Times reprint
(2) Environmental rules.
(3) ENR Article
(4) Rep. Ottinger Speech