May 23, 1966

The Honorable Joseph D. Tydings
Committee on Public Works
United States Senate
Washington, D.C.

Dear Senator Tydings:

I am pleased to forward a copy of the full statement which I supplied, together with certain documents referred to therein, to the Subcommittee on Air and Water Pollution. I shall welcome any questions which may arise in your mind concerning this statement. Senator Muskie, in his questioning at the time of my appearance, appeared to have the view, at any rate at first, that I was somewhat more certain of my position in this matter than the facts justified. (I do not suggest that he was unfair or unduly critical, and his questions may well have been a means of testing the strength of my position.) I think, however, that it may be worth while to emphasize the fact that most of those who would view this situation with concern have come upon it recently and are lacking in awareness of the background in which I and my associates have lived and about which we have been inquiring steadily for all the years since 1924. Experience has a way of building an assurance that cannot be obtained even from the printed record.

There is another matter, however, to which I consider it important to refer. Dr. Claire Patterson, who testified some days after I did, made a special point of condemming certain alliances of investigative agencies (governmental and educational) with industrial organizations. Such relationships, in his somewhat naive (or perhaps cynical) view, were productive inevitably of bias. I should like to combat this view, not only in the interest of truth, but also as a matter of public policy. I am not interested, especially, in Dr. Patterson or his views, but I am gravely, deeply interested in medical and hygienic research in the fields of occupational and environmental health. Having been fully dedicated to university life in my student and early professional life, I was drawn, as a physiologist, into the maelstrom of the early and later technological revolution (so to speak) in the American community, by a fluke - actually by the deep trouble in which one of my technological friends became involved. In undertaking to help him out, I discovered what was happening in American industry and some of its effects upon the entire community. I was never able to return to the somewhat sequestered life of the university as I had visualized it previously. Instead I found the means, through industrial support of investigations into industrial hazards, of taking the University of Cincinnati (one Department of it) into certain industrial activities, that threatened workmen and the population generally - not only with respect to lead, but as to a number of other seemingly urgent problems. The outcome of this was the Kettering Laboratory, which quite openly and frankly, has investigated industrial operations in plants and research laboratories, has carried out surveys, practical investigations, and fundamental researches, at the expense of industry, and has engaged further in the training of professional men - I mean professional hygienic personnel, rather than technicians who could be kept in the pockets of industry - who would advise and guide industry in hygienic matters and in public policy in that direction. It is quite impossible

to do this type of responsible research and professional training within the walls of a university that believes that it must withdraw into its own environment in order to maintain its virtue. Such virtue is only skin-deep, and is of little worth to men and women who, in their professional lives, must face the world as it is, and do what they may in it and with it. Occupational and environmental medicine cannot be pursued and learned within the university, or, for that matter, in the hospital; they operate in industry and in the community, and must acquire their applied functions therein, through understanding of the fields in which the applications must be made.

Moreover, in matters of air, water and food contamination, the actual bases of control exist not in governmental agencies but within industry, and industrial management must have both the knowledge and the statesmenlike understanding of the society of our time, and their responsibilities therein, if we are ever to achieve satisfactory solutions of our hygienic problems. Government can assist, guide, educate, cajole, and, when necessary, compel obedience to certain rules, but such obedience is a poor substitute for voluntary effort and wise policy. There are signs - a bit too scarce, I admit - that American industry is learning and acting, and unless this attitude is encouraged, cultivated and respected, we shall be in a sorry mess in the midst of a technological movement that offers comfort, convenience and prosperity with one hand and numerous uncontrolled threats to human life and satisfactinn, with the other.

Since I have had an almost unparalled opportunity to observe the hygienic impact of industrial developments in this country from the "horse and buggy days" of the late eighteen hundreds, up to the space explorations of the middle and later nineteen hundreds, I find it difficult to remain silent when children and fools advance ideas that are wholly out of keeping with the times and the very real threats that modern society is facing, because of the incompleteness of our knowledge of the impact on human life of the headlong progress of technology. We are not privileged, in the practical affairs of modern times, to take intellectual postures that smack of old-world asceticism. We must work, we must look on life with fresh, clear and fearless vision, and try, before it is too late, to steer many of our fellow men into ways of doing and thinking that take account of human well-being and the imminence of disaster because of ignorance, mistaken acts and unsound judgments.

You will forgive me, I trust, for a certain evangelism in my words and views. I seldom have the opportunity to speak to those who have political power and influence, as well as the responsibility for shaping our course in other than professional circles. And, since I have seen much, and have the life-long impulses of the typical university professor, I feel impelled to speak.

Sincerely yours,

Robert A. Kehoe, M.D.
Professor Emeritus
Occupational Medicine

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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS

20 June 1966

Dr. Robert A. Kehoe
Professor Emeritus of Occupational Medicine
College of Medicine
University of Cincinnati
Cincinnati, Ohio

Dear Professor Kehoe:

As a member of the Senate Subcommittee on Air and Water Pollution, I was quite interested by your recent testimony that the problem caused by lead in our environment has been studied intensively.

Would you send me a copy of your statement before the subcommittee. I would welcome any additional comments you might care to make on any of the other aspects relating to the pollution of air.

Best wishes.

Sincerely yours,

Joseph D. Tydings

Joseph D. Tydings
United States Senator