

October 11, 1963

Stephen J. Fierberg, Ph.D.
Gulf General Atomic, Inc.
P.O. Box #608
San Diego, California 92112

Dear Doctor Fierberg:

Perhaps I should have written to you some time ago, if only as a matter of professional (and personal) courtesy. However, until recently, I have not been able to speak with a reasonable degree of certainty about the program of investigation which we have discussed many months ago, and I hesitated to say anything more about it until I could do so productively. I am now in position to tell you where matters stand, although I am still unable to do anything more.

The difficulty behind the scenes, of which I was not fully aware, arose, in the first instance, out of the efforts of one of the technical men in the Detroit Laboratories of Ethyl Corporation (under the stimulation of George Roush, Jr., M.D., Medical Director of Ethyl Corporation, to whom this man, Arthur Hawkes, has been assigned as technical consultant), to proceed at about the same time and in much the same direction that I had gone with you and your group, but with the group in Argonne Laboratory. He had gone far enough in this to secure a firm proposal for providing Pb²⁰³ at about one-fifth of the cost represented in your proposal. (Whether this can be done is quite another matter, but no doubt appeared to exist on this score, so that it seemed wise to accept the proposal.) Before doing so, however, it had been decided that some preliminary work with animals, using Pb²¹⁰, would be carried out with the financial support of Ethyl Corporation, and another laboratory where some work of this type had been done previously, and where the tools for doing the work were at hand. I found out that these arrangements had been made when I went to Dr. Roush, and expressed myself emphatically to the effect that your proposal should be accepted or rejected without further delay. It had been my impression that the matter was being neglected because of certain other fairly urgent matters, and I had become increasingly embarrassed at my position in the matter. Apparently, George Roush, who is my good friend (and my junior, of course), was somewhat embarrassed in a situation which required him, - or someone - to acquaint me with the facts and so to call me off. My problem was complicated by an internal situation in the Kettering Laboratory which has now come to a head (with what outcome can only be learned later), through the resignation of Dr. Roush as a member of its staff (he has gone to Tulane in New Orleans), and with the resignation (at about the same time) of Dr. Radford, my successor as the Director of the Laboratory. I won't go into the issues behind these events, but I believe you will understand that there has been a great deal of uncertainty as to where we stand, and how this project might be prosecuted. I regret very much, indeed, that you and your associates have been the victims of our collective indecision. Indeed, I would not go into any of these details, which cannot be fully understood on the outside of our associations in this Laboratory and in Ethyl Corporation, but for the fact that I seem to have been guilty not only of a very clumsy performance but of an unintentional discourtesy. I hope you and your associates, with whom I have become acquainted to my great pleasure and satisfaction, will forgive me for both of these faults.

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to you for advice and help, for I am their consultant on these matters. If so, I shall be fully authorized to do so, and I shall hope, under such circumstances, to be reinstated in your good grace. One thing is quite clear to me. This problem must be solved in a definitive manner without undue delay. It may be that none of it can be done in the Kettering Laboratory. Perhaps it can be done in Dr. Roush's new laboratory at Tulane. We shall have to wait until a new Director is named here, before we can even guess.

With my thanks for your courtesy and hospitality and my kindest and most respectful regards. Should Mrs. Kehoe and I come to San Francisco and San Diego in December, which we hope to do, I shall get in touch with you.

Sincerely yours,

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

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