

Environmental Health Department

August 10, 1973

Mr. James Callaghan
Hill & Knowlton, Inc.
201 East 42 Street
New York, New York

Dear Jim:

I have made some changes in the reply to Science News.

If you agree with them, go ahead and send them out.
If you feel that there should be more changes that
you would like to see made, then go ahead with that.

I will be returning to the office on August 21st.

Sincerely,

Jerome F. Cole, Sc.D.
Director, Environmental Health

cc: ✓ Dr. D.R. Lynam
Dr. S.F. Radtke
Mr. P.E. Robinson
Mr. J.F. Smith

SW

LIA-76464



Lead Industries Association, Inc.

292 Madison Avenue • New York, N. Y. 10017 • Telephone: (212) 532-2373

Environmental Health Department

August 10, 1973

Mr. Kendrick Frazier, Editor
Science News
1719 Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20036

Dear Mr. Frazier:

Contrary to the opinion expressed in the recent article, "Trace Pollutants: The Hidden Villains," the bulk of scientific evidence argues that the amount of lead in the air from automobile exhaust poses no health threat to the general public.

With due respect to Dr. Henry Schroeder, the subject of the article, you would be unlikely to find agreement within the scientific community that he is "unequivocally the nation's authority" on lead, cadmium, or any other trace element. On the subject of lead in gasoline and general environmental contamination by lead, the National Academy of Sciences has stated, "... lead attributed to emission and dispersion into general ambient air has no known harmful effects." Also, Dr. Robert A. Kehoe, Professor Emeritus of the Kettering Laboratory at the University of Cincinnati, has stated: "In the entire literature of this subject, there is not one whit of evidence that any one has ever suffered any harm or impairment of health or well-being as a consequence of the occurrence of lead in the general human environment, as far as is known to us, admittedly somewhat incompletely, at this time in history."

Reference was made to Dr. Schroeder's studies which attempt to show that ingested lead causes a shortening of the life span and heart disease. Schroeder himself has admitted to several errors in the studies. First of all, the rats were fed a dosage five times greater than was originally reported. (A dosage that would be 250 times greater than a human would normally ingest.) Secondly, due to an oversight, the essential trace element, chromium, was not included in the diet of the animals. When chromium was included, lead, even at this extremely high dosage, was, according to Schroeder, "not toxic to males in terms of growth and survival." (Female rats were not tested).

There are other problems with the study, but this should suffice to indicate the dubiousness of Dr. Schroeder's conclusions. On the other side of the coin, the recently completed Seven-City Study sponsored jointly by industry and the Federal Environmental Protection Agency shows no relationship between blood lead levels and the amount of lead in the air. Approximately 2,000 individuals were tested in this study.

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Mr. K. Frazier

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As an indication of the findings, it was shown that residents of Los Angeles, which has a relatively high air lead level, had smaller amounts of lead in their blood than residents of Philadelphia, where air lead levels are significantly lower.

The problem of lead poisoning in this country is primarily caused by children who live in dilapidated old houses who eat chips and flakes of old highly leaded paints which were put on the walls prior to the 1950's. The Lead Industries Association had actively participated in numerous programs aimed at combating this problem and continues to do so. Certainly this is a significant health problem in our inner cities. However, the statement in the article that over a fourth of all American children have levels of lead in their bodies that border on toxicity is an error. Studies have shown that approximately 25% of inner city children living in poor housing have elevated blood lead levels. We know of no EPA report which would substantiate the quote made in the article. The subject of airborne lead is one that is deserving of continual monitoring and study, but articles such as the one in Science News do little to help establish the rational perspective necessary to the formulation of sound judgments on scientific matters.

Sincerely,

Jerome F. Cole, Sc.D.
Director, Environmental Health

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