



JAN 28 1991

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Stephen B. Hamilton, Jr.
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General Electric Company
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[Handwritten signature]

January 23, 1991

Mr. Sherwood Guernsey, II
152 North Street - Suite 330
Pittsfield, MA 01201

Dear Mr. Guernsey:

Thank you for your letter of January 3, 1991, regarding the Pittsfield-GE Cancer Mortality Study, performed by Drs. Wegman, Greenland and Smith.

This response addresses the two major issues contained in your letter, i.e., the credibility of the study and GE's release of the input data.

Regarding the credibility of the study, at your request and with our agreement, NIOSH was involved in overseeing the study beginning in 1985, when Dr. James Melius and Mr. Robert Rinsky reviewed the study protocol and met with Drs. Wegman, Greenland and Salvan to discuss the study. They concluded that the study was properly designed and in competent hands. In addition, they began to attend progress meetings with the investigators, GE representatives and your office and constituents from time to time.

In addition, GE appointed a panel of experts in epidemiology, biostatistics and industrial hygiene from academia and the government to review the study. In performing its review, the Panel interacted with the study team, GE and, on several occasions, Dr. Thomas Sinks of NIOSH. When the study was released in Pittsfield on January 14, 1990, Dr. Leon Gordis, Professor and Chairman of the Department of Epidemiology at Johns Hopkins University, and Chairman of the panel of experts, commented:

"I believe that the employees can have great confidence in this study—both because of the strength of the investigator, Dr. Wegman, who is one of the country's experts in this field, and his co-investigator, Dr. Greenland, who is also a major expert in the methodology involved in this type of study. In addition, the Scientific Advisory Panel, which I chaired, is composed of leading experts who provided their input to help make the study as fine as possible."

The review panel and Dr. Sinks all agreed that the study was properly designed and carried out, and that the data analysis was thorough. Dr. Sinks summarized his views in his letter to you of October 26, when he stated:

"It is highly doubtful that a second cancer mortality study at the General Electric Pittsfield facility would provide any useful additional information since no new data have been identified and the Wegman Study has fully exploited the available data.

"I understand that there remain doubts and concerns in the community. These concerns are well intentioned. Even so, these concerns cannot be resolved by further investigations with the available information."

Regarding the supplying of input data, there are two major types of data in the system that are used in the analysis. These are the causes of death and the exposures to chemicals in the workplace. The causes for each of the 1714 deaths included in the study were supplied to Mr. Bates by Dr. Wegman in October, 1987. The verification of causes of death was discussed in the Wegman report, as I explained in my letter to Mr. Bates, of November 2, 1990. However, as discussed with Mr. Bates and Mr. Fessenden in a meeting at Pittsfield on September 18, 1990, the names of the individuals were not provided because some of that information was obtained on a confidential basis from state health departments.

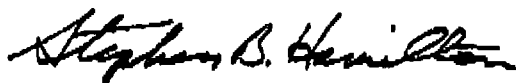
The exposure assessments were based on data from interviews of long-term plant personnel because there was not adequate historical monitoring data available to estimate chemical exposures for workers in the plant. Mr. Bates and Mr. Fessenden were among the individuals interviewed as part of that process and, according to a letter to Mr. Bates from the interviewer in September, 1985, their ratings of exposures were similar to other ratings gathered. To my knowledge, Mr. Bates has never taken issue with that letter.

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We have repeatedly attempted to address concerns and issues raised by Mr. Bates and Mr. Fessenden in a fair and straightforward way, including the sponsoring of a special analysis of data from Buildings 12 and 100, performed by Dr. Wegman, which was outside the scope of the study. We agree with the members of our panel and NIOSH that the study was conducted properly, and that further analysis of these data will not provide additional useful information. However, we remain available to address further questions that you may have regarding the quality and depth of analysis contained in Dr. Wegman's study.

Very truly yours,



S.B. Hamilton, Manager-Environmental
Science and Technology

SBH:cas

cc: Hon. John F. Kerry
Dr. Thomas Sinks
Mr. Bruce Farren
Mr. Ronald Desgroseilliers
Mr. Edward Bates✓
Mr. Charles Fessenden