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IN SAFETY AND HEALTH

January 28, 1986

Legal Section
Industrial Commission of Ohio
246 N. High Street
Columbus, OH 43215

OD 24387-22
Beverly Thompson (Herrmann)
General Motors
Cincinnati, OH 45212

Attn: Judy Spencer

Ms. Spencer:

A visit was made to the General Motors facility located at 4726 Smith Road, Cincinnati on January 21, 1986 by the undersigned. This visit was made in an effort to obtain information relative to the claimant's work history.

According to company records, the claimant was hired on April 30, 1977 and the last day worked was August 30, 1979. The claimant went on extended sick leave after August 30, 1979. Also according to company records, the claimant's seniority was broken on January 18, 1982. This means that the claimant had been off of work as much as she had worked as of that date.

Actual observation of the working conditions under which the claimant may have worked were impossible due to extensive renovations which were accomplished in 1982. The areas where the claimant worked have either been completely changed or eliminated. A check of records from the plant safety office determined that samples had been collected in the vinyl top applying area by the corporate industrial hygienist. The results of these samples indicated little potential for hazard and that the ventilation in this area was good.

The disability, as noted in the claim file in a letter from Dr. Kenneth Wehr dated June 17, 1985, is "chronic obstructive airways disease in the form of underlying asthma." Elsewhere in the claim file, in a discharge summary from Fort Hamilton-Hughes Hospital dated December 7, 1983 it is indicated that the obstructive airways disease is consistent with "asthmatic bronchitis and/or occupational asthma." It is also indicated that either of these could be exacerbated by exposure to 2

solvents. However, according to company records, the claimant had not worked for the instant employer since August 30, 1979. According to one source, the principal complaint associated with occupational asthma is of wheezing related to work. "This most typically occurs in an atopic individual who has worked for four or five years in the industry, but nonatopic individuals may become sensitized and manifest asthma some years later than their atopic co-workers."¹ "It is usual for the symptoms to become gradually worse as the [work] week continues, and sometimes recovery takes several days or even weeks after exposure ceases."² It is also possible to determine the agent or allergen responsible for the asthmatic effects through a bronchial challenge. "The main indications for inhalational challenges are:

1. When occupational asthma is suspected but when the agent to which the worker is exposed is not recognized as a cause of this condition.
2. When the worker is exposed to more than one recognized cause of occupational asthma.
3. When absolute confirmation of the diagnosis is necessary, i.e., prior to telling a worker to give up a job."³

In conclusion, the claimant worked in an area with a minimal potential for exposure to various solvents. This was documented by air samples collected by corporate industrial hygienists. The work history of the claimant ended on August 30, 1979. The pulmonary problems first became evident during a hospital stay in October 1983. Typically, as aforementioned, recovery of symptoms occurs after the exposure ceases. It is unlikely that the claimed disability is solely related to occupational exposures while employed with the instant employer.

Respectfully submitted,

James L. Taylor

James L. Taylor
Industrial Hygienist

JLT/jt

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References:

1. Occupational Lung Diseases, 2nd Edition, W. K. Morgan, M.D. and A. Seaton, M.D., W. B. Saunders Company, 1984, pp. 501-502.
2. Occupational Lung Diseases, 2nd Edition, W. K. Morgan, M.D. and A. Seaton, M.D., W. B. Saunders Company, 1984, p. 502.
3. Occupational Lung Diseases, 2nd Edition, W. K. Morgan, M.D. and A. Seaton, M.D., W. B. Saunders Company, 1984, p. 503.

4.

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