

UNION CARBIDE CORPORATION
CHEMICALS AND PLASTICS

270 PARK AVENUE, NEW YORK, N. Y. 10017

July 18, 1974

Dr. Robert W. Cairns
Executive Director-American Chemical Society
1155 Sixteenth Street N.W.
Washington D. C.

Dear Dr. Cairns:

I am writing you this letter in part, to protest the position of the American Chemical Society in its statement to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration on the proposed standard for occupational exposure to vinyl chloride and, in part, to ask that you give public notice of the fact that the position of ACS in this matter does not represent consensus of the membership but rather the view of a limited group of committeemen having only a most limited understanding of the facts related to this most sensitive matter. Perhaps had you or your associate, Dr. S. T. Quigley, attended the regular sessions of the Hearing, you would have seen first-hand how inept was the presentation of the ACS; the ACS' presented no facts or experimental evidence as to the biological activity of VCM; produced no study as to the value of the proposed monitoring, assay, medical surveillance, and protective equipment recommendations; put on the record no information as the engineering or economic feasibility; offered no epidemiological evidence. As the record now shows, the ACS offered opinion in support of the "no detectable" standard proposed by OSHA while the evidence presented in fact contravenes the need of such a drastic standard. Support of the OSHA proposal by the ACS is especially unrealistic in light of the massive contrary evidence presented by various industry spokesmen (including well-informed ACS members) that:

1. Not even continuous exposure to vinyl chloride monomer in high concentrations over a period of time will necessarily result in any deleterious effects in humans. No evidence of any such effects at levels below 200 parts per million exposure were shown.

2. The animal data on vinyl chloride monomer exposure which is the only possible basis cited for imposing any exposure limits is not only self-contradictory, inconclusive and non-probative in itself but also cannot be and has not been related or translated into human experience. The testimony on the human experience as for example that of Dr. Dornick, shows that little if any harm has in fact come from employee exposure to vinyl chloride monomer, even over extended periods at high concentrations; see also the Dow Chemical Company testimony that no ill effects on humans at less

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than 200 parts per million exposure levels were ascertainable from their extensive studies.

3. As to the issue of feasibility, the critical facts are, as the hearing testimony clearly showed without meaningful rebuttal, that there is no way for the industry, with existing technology, to meet the standard proposed by OSHA. The fact that many companies including Union Carbide, are able to meet an employee exposure level for vinyl chloride monomer lower than 50 parts per million does not mean that they can achieve levels below 25-30 parts per million and achieve a no detectable level. The companies are the only ones that have the facts on this phase of the problem and are the only ones in any position to make this sort of assessment. They conclude unanimously, as all have emphatically stated, achieving a no detectable level is simply not possible at the present time, even though they are all willing to make the attempt. Statements by ACS that the OSHA proposal can be met arise wholly out of ignorance or a self-serving desire to justify a position otherwise unsupportable.

The evidence OSHA possesses and noted by ACS merely shows that a statistically insignificant number of employees, exposed continuously for prolonged periods of time to high vinyl chloride monomer concentration, could possibly get angiosarcoma; even that result is not a proven certainty. The evidence showed nothing else, nor will a review of the OSHA and NIOSH presentations at the hearing show any warrant for any such stringent regulations as is proposed. If there is truly a hazard even from unregulated vinyl chloride monomer exposures it at best is slight; limited to a workplace producing or using vinyl chloride monomer and, indeed, to a very few areas in any such workplace, without any impact on the environment outside; and a hazard in the workplace only at continuous exposure levels far beyond those OSHA limits either in effect at this time or proposed.

Perhaps the ACS position paper might have given notice that there will be a severe environmental impact resulting from the economic consequences of adopting the proposed standard, wholly unwarranted by the hazard sought to be met, and which ought not to be imposed either on employers; on the employees affected by job loss; or on the consumers who use vinyl chloride monomer-related products in many harmless forms.

The Directors of the ACS as a minimum, might have sought advice and comment from ACS members who are working in the midst of this sensitive matter before the Directors issued a position paper in behalf of these members.

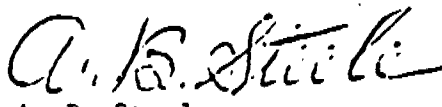
In summary, it is my view that the ACS did a dis-service to its membership by participating at the Hearing on occupational exposure to vinyl chloride in support of the proposed OSHA Standard without

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providing factual evidence generated by the ACS through research or survey on which to enlarge the total understanding of the sensitive matter of VCM toxicology. The participation implied that the ACS position was that of its membership which, by my standards, is a gross misrepresentation. As a minimum corrective action, I ask you to put on the public record the fact that the presentation by ACS at the Hearing is the view of a limited number of Director members and not the consensus of the ACS membership. Additionally, I would hope that the ACS refrains from continuing to create a public record on the matter of VCM toxicity until such time as the ACS itself has a factual contribution to make to the issue.

With kindest personal regards and the hope that the views of an active ACS member of more than 35 years will be heard.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "A. B. Steele".

A. B. Steele

ABS/nn

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