

APCO
Producers Association

Public Affairs Committee
International Affairs Committee

J. F. Welch

J. F. Welch, Director, Public Affairs

April 27, 1981

SUBJECT

Field Problem - Ocean County, New Jersey

ACTION REQUIRED: Review for information

Enclosed is a letter to the editor written by Hal Olson of Johns-Manville. The letter corrects misrepresentations made in the Editor's Note in a January 31, 1981 editorial.

Also enclosed are articles from the March 28 and March 31 issues of the Ocean County Reporter.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call.

JFW/ajb

Enclosure

cc: A. Kahn, Esq.
N. Rahn, Esq.
N. Battie

copies to: Public Affairs Committee

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✓ W. Perrell
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International Affairs Comm.

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WEDNESDAY, APRIL 8, 1981 OCEAN COUNTY REPORTER

Editorial

Rebuttal

To The Editor:

In your Jan. 21 issue of The Ocean County Reporter, you printed a letter from John Welch of the Asbestos-Cement Pipe Producers Association in which Mr. Welch defended the use of A-C pipe and referenced a report of the American Water Works Association Research Foundation.

Your Editor's Note criticized Mr. Welch for using a 1974 report, and you in turn stated, "In 1977, the National Academy of Sciences concluded that asbestos cement water pipe data strongly suggests that ingestion of asbestos mineral fibers can result in an increased risk of cancer of several sites."

This statement is totally false, and should be retracted so that your readers are not more misinformed than they are now. I rather suspect that you drew your quotation from a paper presented by EPA's Jim Millette at the International Symposium on Water Supply and Health. Mr. Millette took a sentence from the 1977 National Academy of Science report out of context. The very next sentence would have totally reversed the meaning. I believe Mr. Millette should be severely criticized for leaving a false impression as to what the National Academy of Science report said when he should know that he was distorting the meaning of the report. Mr. Millette, however, did not state as you have that the reference in the N.A.S. report had anything to do with "asbestos water pipe data."

Mr. Millette referenced the sentence to airborne asbestos dust breathed by industrial workers. This data was based on a period of time when there were far different dust conditions in industry than are in effect today. Mr. Millette's reference tried to tie industrial airborne data to asbestos ingested with water, but he was not so bold as to make a clear definitive statement to this effect as you have. I am sending you a copy of a letter I recently wrote to Mr. Millette in which I call Mr. Millette to task for misleading his audience by taking a sentence from the N.A.S. Report out of context with the conclusions of the report.

The other incorrect reference Mr. Millette made and which you again quoted was, "...there is now some direct human evidence of a relationship between asbestos in drinking water and increased cancer risk." This, too, is a totally erroneous conclusion, and was neither the conclusion of the researcher nor the official position of the EPA.

In your editorial in the January 31 issue of The Reporter, another incorrect scare statement is made that will cause more confusion and anguish by your readers. I refer to the statement, "Water treatment to positively protect the lining of asbestos pipe would so harden the water as to present a different health hazard — heart attacks — also borne out by statistics." It is true there is a generally recognized statistical correlation between "hardness" in water and heart attacks. The relationship, however, is diametrically opposite to what you state it is, i.e. where there is "hard" water there is a lesser

incidence of heart attack, not greater. Where there is a soft aggressive water (such as would attack any piping material including asbestos cement) there is a statistical greater incidence of heart attack. The reason for this relationship is unknown, but one commonly believed theory is that it is due to cardiotoxic metals that are leached into the water from metallic pipe (see attached report).

There is one thing in life that is certain; and that is the fact there is absolutely nothing in this world that is 100 percent "safe." Whether the water you drink comes from A-C pipe, iron pipe, plastic pipe or copper pipe, there is no 100 percent guarantee that there is zero risk associated with its consumption. Beer and scotch whiskey have also been accused of containing cancer-causing agents. We all have heard of the hazards from cholesterol associated with drinking milk. One solution to the dilemma would be to refrain from drinking any liquid. We would then possibly be safer from cancer and heart attack until such time as we died from thirst.

Reporters and editors have a great responsibility to their reading public. This trust is ill served when scare stories are spread that are not supported by facts, nor a careful review of available literature.

H.L. Olsen
Manager
Environmental & Engineering Department
(Pipe Division)
Johns-Manville Sales Corp.
Denver, Colo.
Feb. 23, 1981

J. Welch

RECEIVED APR - 8 1981

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H.L. Olsen
Manager

Environmental & Engineering Department
(Pipe Division)
Johns-Manville Sales Corp.
Denver, Colo.
Feb. 23, 1981

J. Welch

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Tests for asbestos stir controversy

By GENE GATENS

They know that health agencies have set no standards on the safe ingestion of asbestos particles in drinking water.

They realize that the federal Environmental Protection Agency and the Asbestos Pipe Users Association maintain that asbestos-cement pipe is safe for use.

And they know that if the Brick Township Municipal Utility Authority (BTMUA) were to honor their request to replace the pipe, it would set off a wave of requests by other water utility ratepayers.

Undaunted, a group of residents from the Sutton Village condominiums and the Holbrook Manor housing development in Brick Town is demanding the removal of the asbestos-cement pipe.

"We will not accept any amount of asbestos in our drinking water," said group spokesman Paul Yanchosky, acknowledging that the ingestion of asbestos fibers has not been proven to be a carcinogen.

"There is no reason to take a risk on ingesting something that may turn out to be harmful in 20 years."

The group has only 10 percent asbestos ce-

ment pipe," he said. "It's a one-shot deal. Replace the 10 percent with ductile iron pipe or pvc pipe and it's done with. You have a 100 percent asbestos pipe-free system."

Yanchosky says replacing the pipe now "would be better than paying taxes for the next twenty years to maintain a system that we don't even feel safe about. And in twenty years, if they're forced to tear up the pipe, we're going to be faced with more costs. We're already paying what are probably the highest sewage and water rates around."

Yanchosky asks: "Don't you think it would be more sensible to replace the 10 percent of pipe now than to wonder what's going to happen twenty years from now?"

"I realize that they (health officials) say that ingestion of asbestos is not harmful, but five years ago they said that asbestos was not harmful when inhaled either. Now there are all kinds of restrictions on airborne asbestos."

"With costs to do this type of working rising every day, now is the time to replace the pipe," Yanchosky says.

According to Yanchosky, about 370 residents have already signed a petition stating that they will not accept any amount of asbestos in the drinking water.

The group plans to present the petition to the

MUA at its meeting tonight at 8 p.m. in the authority building on Route 88.

The group hopes to enlist the aid of Carl Cahill, the man largely responsible for having the use of asbestos cement pipe banned in Connecticut. According to Yanchosky, Cahill has compiled reams of information on the issue, and for \$3000 he will spend one week sharing his information with interested groups.

Yanchosky says the price of this venture is a drawback, but he says the MUA, from the beginning, has requested the aid of persons who are knowledgeable of the issue, and that they should be the ones that pay for Cahill's appearance.

Yanchosky says the group plans to file a formal complaint with the state Department of Environmental Protection to that effect that it objects to the use of the pipe.

In addition to its opposition to the pipe, the group questions the validity of MUA-commissioned tests for asbestos content.

The authority reported earlier this month that tests performed at Franklin Research Center in Philadelphia showed 700,000 fibers greater than 5 microns in length per liter of water taken from a home at 8 Amy Court, Sutton Village, and said additional testing for asbestos content would begin immediately.

Last week, however, the authority said the 700,000 fiber count was erroneous. The actual count, it said, was 70,000 fibers per liter.

MUA executive director Andrew Ciesla attributed the error to a misinterpretation of the results. He said he mistook .7 times ten

to the sixth power for .07 times ten to the sixth power, a difference of one decimal point.

The manager of the chemistry labs at the testing center verified that an error such as this is common.

But Mrs. Frank Martin, who resides at 8 Amy Court, claims that new testing for asbestos has never been performed.

"A man came to my house the Friday after the results were released and said he was going to test the water," Mrs. Martin recalls. "I asked him what the tests were for, and he said they were for hardness, aggressivity and alkalinity. He said the authority would test the water and that the results would be available that (Friday) afternoon. I asked him if he was going to test for asbestos and he said 'No, we're not scheduled for any tests on asbestos.'"

Mrs. Martin says that when she called the authority the following Monday, she was told that there was nothing wrong with her water.

Ciesla maintains that two water samples taken on that day were for further asbestos testing, and in fact the water is being tested at this moment.

He said he does not know why the man who took the water samples said what he did, or if in fact he did say it.

Yanchosky invites interested persons to attend the next group meeting at the Sutton Village Clubhouse off Sally Ike Road, Bricktown on Wednesday, April 8 at 8 p.m.

The MUA meets tonight, Wednesday, March 25, at 8:30 in the authority building on Route 88.