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Johns-Manville **Internal Correspondence**

AL1026915 46 Exh 15

To: P. Kotin, M.D. Date: January 20, 1977

From: E. N. Penner

Copies:

Subject: COBRA BRAKE SHOES

As we discussed this morning it is my opinion that Johns-Manville eventually will be forced into the production of asbestos-free COBRA brake shoes if it wishes to retain its dominant place in the railroad friction materials industry. I base this opinion on the following points.

1. Presently there is a tremendous amount of hysteria and emotion concerning the health effects of exposure to small quantities of airborne asbestos fiber. This has extended to the government regulatory agencies where NIOSH is proposing an airborne exposure limit of 0.1 f/cc 8 hour TWA and 0.5 f/cc ceiling concentration.

2. Experiments by Westinghouse Air Brake have shown that the heat of brake application does not convert all fiber in the brake shoe to an amorphous mineral but that approximately 1% is released to the atmosphere as asbestos fiber.

3. The United Transport Union believes that operating trainmen are being exposed to fibers released from overheated brake shoes, and have requested the Department of Transportation to determine if asbestos-free brake shoes can be provided. This union concern has been conveyed to WABCO and they have recommended to us the development and production of an asbestos-free brake shoe.

4. There is a large potential market ($2.0M) for composition brake shoes in subway use. I understand the mass transit systems in New York City and Atlanta have mandated an asbestos-free shoe.

5. Our major competition, Abex Corp., is presently producing, marketing and extensively advertising an asbestos and lead free composition. A copy of their advertisement is attached.

The asbestos-containing product apparently is superior in performance to our experimental asbestos-free composition and to the Abex shoe; but both meet the specifications of the American Association of Railroads.

I understand that Chet Sulewski has recommended that HS&E prepare a program to combat this situation, by convincing all interested parties that no significant health hazard is created by the use of the present COBRA shoe. I am afraid that this would be very difficult to do.

E. M[illegible]enger

EMF:jh
Attach.