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Chief Medical Officer

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July 28 1959

Dr R.A.Kehoe,
The Kettering Laboratory of Applied Psychology,
University of Cincinnati,
College of Medicine,
Eden Avenue,
Cincinnati 19,
Ohio, U.S.A.

Dear Doctor Kehoe:

This is in answer to the first part of your last letter, which I was grateful to receive.

It was of considerable interest to read your remarks on the volatile lead compounds and I fully appreciate the delicacy of your own situation in regard to any information that might be available to us medically on this subject.

It is clear that the intrinsic toxicity of these various compounds is roughly of the same order as TEL, and equally clear that the physical characteristic of TML in connection with its much higher volatility is the kernel of the medical problem.

At first glance it would seem to me that if the present maximum quantity of TEL allowed per gallon of gasoline was originally established as the safe limit above which volatilisation of lead out of gasoline could create an atmospheric hazard, then the handling of a gasoline containing even small quantities of lead compounds of higher volatility is immediately going to create unsafe conditions. It is difficult to see how one can side-step this issue, since the whole purpose of considering these other lead compounds in gasoline is bound up with this question of higher volatility. Would it be possible therefore for you to comment directly on this point, as perhaps I have misunderstood what you have in mind in trying to re-assess the lead hazard in these new terms ?

I should perhaps also mention that were the present margin of safety to be reconsidered in any way as far as the vaporisation of lead out of gasoline is concerned, serious difficulties might have to be faced in a number of countries, such as Switzerland and France, where - as you will recall - there was considerable resistance to the use of lead in gasoline and its acceptance was

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in large measure due to existing experience in the handling and use of TEL in other parts of the world.

Before any decision to change even in part from the present TEL standards, not only our own industry but also the whole oil industry would have to give serious consideration to possible repercussions in such countries.

This department will look forward to receiving any information on the toxicological issues which you can provide.

With kindest personal regards,

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Philip", is written over a horizontal line.