



**Johns-Manville
Sales Corporation**

Ken-Caryl Ranch
Denver, Colorado 80217
(303) 979-1000



April 28, 1978

Dear Sirs:

In case you did not read Johns-Manville's press release regarding Mr. Califano's recent press conference and subsequent media reports regarding past conditions under which workers were exposed to asbestos, a copy is enclosed for your reference.

Yours very truly,

J. E. Connor
National Sales Manager
Asbestos Fiber

JEC:mh

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Johns-Manville News

APRIL 28, 1978

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STATEMENT OF
JOHN A. MCKINNEY
PRESIDENT AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
JOHNS-MANVILLE CORPORATION

This statement is made in response to media reports on a press conference held Wednesday (April 26) by Secretary Joseph A. Califano of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare and refers to his printed statement which was distributed at the time of the conference.

Past conditions in which workers were exposed to asbestos bear no relationship whatsoever to regulated conditions under which we work today.

We believe Secretary Califano's statement represented an objective analysis of asbestos-related health problems. It is regrettable that media reports we have seen failed to reflect the real substance of his approach.

At no time did he refer to asbestos-related health problems except in the context of persons "heavily exposed to asbestos before the government began to regulate," or those "exposed in the past, especially those from the war years," or "past workers." These three important qualifiers are repeated throughout the text of his presentation, yet they are almost studiously absent in the media reports.

The numerical projections contained in the Secretary's statement are extremes that are clearly based on past conditions virtually

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nonexistent at present. As a matter of fact, he said that "as a result of recent government regulation, current workers, without previous exposure, can be expected to face smaller risks than those exposed in the past." Unfortunately, the media did not clearly point out that contrast between the hazards of past exposure and the present regulated occupational environment.

In addition, we do not believe the role of cigarette smoking was emphasized sufficiently in the reports we've seen.

Secretary Califano said that "a person who smokes and has been exposed to asbestos faces a greater risk of developing asbestosis and of dying from a respiratory ailment than an asbestos-exposed individual who does not smoke."

As far as lung cancer is concerned, Dr. Paul Kotin, our Senior Vice President of Health, Safety and Environment, advises me that clinical evidence shows that lung cancer in asbestos workers is virtually limited to those who smoke cigarettes, and that, for all practical purposes, lung cancer as an asbestos-related disease would not be a problem were it not for cigarette smoking.

The overwhelming evidence shows that asbestos workers who smoke face a greatly increased risk of developing lung cancer as well as an increased risk of asbestosis. This is the reason we have moved to eliminate smoking in all of our asbestos-using operations.

Even though the work environments in our plants fully comply with safe levels mandated by government regulations, nonetheless we are eliminating smoking because we believe we can further reduce our employees' risk of contracting lung cancer to that which can be expected in the general non-smoking population.

Dr. Kotin, who is a leading authority on cancer, has emphasized

repeatedly that non-smoking asbestos workers are at minimal risk to the development of lung cancer when compared with the non-smoking general public.

Secretary Califano unfortunately combines smokers and non-smokers in his projection of a "20-25 percent" attack rate for lung cancer in workers exposed to asbestos. Actually, only a very small percentage of non-smoking asbestos workers have developed lung cancer.

Again referring to the past and present, reference in the Secretary's statement to asbestos as a "dangerous and insidious" material clearly relates to past exposures. Indeed, as Drs. Selikoff and Hammond point out in their medical paper, which was distributed with the Secretary's statement, "In terms of public health, the overwhelming problem is the undoing, ameliorating or modifying of both current and anticipated results of past mistakes." (Emphasis added.)

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