

FILE NAME: Talc (TALC)

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CENTER FOR SCIENCE IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST

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May 15, 1972

Barry Castleman
Technical Services Section
Division of Air Pollution &
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Bureau of Environmental Services
Baltimore Co Dept. of Health
Towson, MD 21204

Dear Barry:

Thanks for writing and showing your interest in the talc and asbestos question. There is no reason why we can't cooperate on a project in the full since our type of public interest work is so entirely different from what you anticipate doing. We hope to have a program started in the fall on checking consumer items containing asbestos and talc and finding which ones are most dangerous. We have a partial list of the 3000 or more items and I am hoping that Consumer's Union (which is funding us on other chemicals) will be willing to give us \$10,000 for the coming year.

I would like to get together with you people and plot a cooperative program where we deliver items which are highly dangerous and you would test them to see how friable they really are. We could then carry on the work we are doing now of alerting the FDA, EPA, etc through letters, petitions and lawsuits if necessary; we would eventually write a map of consumer items made from asbestos and talc and give this to Consumer's Union and other consumer groups to generate citizen pressure for regulations.

We asked the NIH to endorse our proposal. They simply couldn't believe that scientists would work at sustenance wages and said the project was good but the funding (about all the CU can afford) was unrealistic. If you folks would show an interest in a cooperative venture and be willing to do analysis, it would fortify our project. If you are so moved, please send a note to the following:

Mr. David Swankin Consumers Union, National Press Bldg, Wash. DC 20004.

You are right in suspecting that the talcs are bad. Art Langer who works with Sellikoff's group at Mt. Sinai is very concerned about their many uses. I think the FDA will have to be shaken from their complacency and made to start some systematic action on these commodities.

Let's get together and talk about these problems (talc and asbestos). My schedule is very tight for the next 5 or 6 weeks (three talks and the Environmental Forum in Europe plus seeing some public interest centers in Europe. I have a few free days next week and will be back after June 22.

Sincerely yours,

Albert J. Fritsch
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