

April 26, 1974

(CHEMICAL COMPANY: A. Vittone

cc: E.W. Harrington
J.L. Nelson
E.B. Osborne
B.M. Zwicker
P.J. Weaver
R.D. Downey)

To: Management Committee
Briefing Group

From: W. T. Duke

The attached news release concerning public exposure to vinyl chloride moved on the UPI wire late yesterday and in an altered version this afternoon.

One query from a newspaper has resulted from the wire story. Ben Zinser, who is science editor for the Long Beach Independent Press Telegraph, called the Long Beach plant and inquired about the report. The Long Beach plant referred the call to me.

I returned the call to Mr. Zinser and told him that we had just seen the story and that for further information he should check with the Environmental Protection Agency. I gave him background information about the Long Beach plant in regard to number of employees and products manufactured, stressing the fact that it is an extremely small plant which was started in 1960. I then gave him previously released information on the current PVC situation.

Mr. Zinser has not used any of the PVC stories in his newspaper up to this point and will point out in a short story in the Long Beach paper that there have been no employee fatalities at the Long Beach plant. Mr. Zinser mentioned to me that he felt the report was most inaccurate from a scientific standpoint.

The Center for Science in the Public Interest is located at 1779 Church Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036, Tel. 202-332-6000. It was organized in 1971 as a Ralph Nader operation but apparently operates independently with support from some foundations and the public. It's a non-profit organization and has investigated lead and other gasoline additives, aerosols, asbestos and food additives, among others. Its principals include Albert Fritsch, a Jesuit priest with a Ph.D. in organic chemistry from MIT; and James Sullivan, with a Ph.D. in meteorology and oceanography from MIT.

W. T. Duke

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Attachment

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WASHINGTON (UPI) -- A RESEARCH GROUP TOLD THE GOVERNMENT TODAY THERE IS A "FEARFUL POSSIBILITY" THAT PEOPLE LIVING IN AT LEAST THREE INDUSTRIAL AREAS OF THE NATION ARE BEING EXPOSED TO AIRBORNE DOSES OF VINYL CHLORIDE, A CHEMICAL LINKED TO LIVER CANCER.

THE CENTER FOR SCIENCE IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST URGED THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY TO HAVE STATE AGENCIES MAKE MEASUREMENTS NEAR FACTORIES IMMEDIATELY TO DETERMINE THE EXTENT OF THE HAZARD.

"WE REGARD THIS AS A POTENTIALLY SERIOUS PUBLIC HEALTH PROBLEM," IT SAID, "AND WORTHY OF IMMEDIATE INVESTIGATION. OUR RESEARCH INDICATES THAT CERTAIN TOWNS AND CITIES MAY BE SERIOUSLY AFFECTED BY VINYL CHLORIDE POLLUTION."

IT SINGLED OUT THE HOUSTON, TEXAS, AREA, SOUTHERN LOUISIANA AND WESTERN KENTUCKY, AS THE THREE PRIME AREAS WHERE FACTORIES PRODUCE SO MUCH VINYL CHLORIDE THAT SMOKESTACKS ARE VENTING THE CHEMICAL. HIGH HUMIDITY AND OTHER CLIMATIC CONDITIONS IN THOSE REGIONS, IT ADDED, COULD MAKE THE SITUATION WORSE.

IT ALSO SAID THERE MAY BE A SIMILAR PROBLEM IN THE PAINSVILLE, OHIO, AREA AND AROUND LONG BEACH, CALIFORNIA.

THE CENTER SAID IT HAD LEARNED THAT EPA'S OWN MEASUREMENTS SHOWED 0.37 PARTS PER MILLION VINYL CHLORIDE ALONG ROUTE 223 IN PASADENA, TEXAS, "IN THE HEART OF THE LARGEST VINYL CHLORIDE PRODUCING REGION IN THE UNITED STATES."

IT CALCULATED THAT AT THE END OF EACH BATCH OF POLYVINYL CHLORIDE MADE IN A 10,000-GALLON REACTOR THERE IS A STACK EMISSION OF 9,000 GRAMS OF VINYL CHLORIDE GAS. "A PERSON UNFORTUNATE ENOUGH TO BE DOWNWIND 100 METERS FROM THE EMISSION WOULD BE EXPOSED TO 200 PARTS PER MILLION," IT ADDED.

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