PLAINTIFF'S EXHIBIT

CAP-1136

A/C Pipe Producers Association
Executive Committee
International Affairs Committee

Internal Correspondence

TO J. F. Welch

FROM J. F. Welch, Vice President

DATE: July 16, 1982

SUBJECT National Academy of Sciences (NAS) - Committee on Safe Drinking Water

REF: JFW correspondence, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) - National Academy of Sciences Report on Drinking Water and Health, June 15, 1982.

ACTION REQUIRED: Review for information

Background

The Safe Drinking Water Act (P.L. 93-523) directs the Administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to have NAS conduct studies to determine the maximum contaminant levels (MCLs) that should be recommended by EPA to protect the health of persons from contaminants in drinking water. The law stipulates these studies should evaluate available data, develop Primary Drinking Water Regulations, identify areas of insufficient knowledge, and make recommendations for future research. The 1977 Amendments called for revisions of these NAS studies to reflect "new information which has come available since the most recent previous report" and to report to Congress each two years thereafter.

The first study, "Drinking Water and Health," was published in 1971. It examined the health effects associated with a number of microbiological, radioactive, chemical and particulate (including asbestos) contaminants found in drinking water, but recommended no MCLs for these substances. The most recent study (Volume IV) identified chemical and biological contaminants associated with drinking water distribution systems and the health implications of deficiencies in those systems (see above reference).

Current Status

On June 24, 1982, Staff met with Dr. Robert Golden, Staff Officer for the Safe Drinking Water Committee to determine the status of the Committee's reassessment of the medical evidence on asbestos in drinking water. The meeting was marked by cordiality and cooperation. Dr. Golden has worked with the Safe Drinking Water Committee since its formation in 1975.

He reported the Committee will review all epidemiological studies on potential health effects of asbestos in drinking water, primarily the post-1977 evidence. This is being done on specific request from EPA. The Committee may be aware of but will not give special consideration to epidemiological studies of occupational cohorts exposed to asbestos because of their limited relevance to the drinking water issue. The EPA Office of Drinking Water also asked the Committee to focus on epidemiological studies because, in Golden's words, "EPA feels the animal feeding studies are essentially negative." Dr. Joseph Cotruvo (Director, Criteria and Standards) has stated to Golden that the Agency may be willing to drop the asbestos issue because "there are enough other problems in drinking water."

The Committee also will review animal feeding studies and may possibly do a risk assessment. This exercise would be secondary to the epidemiological review. He doubted that the Committee would have much to say on the asbestos feeding studies because the results were all negative. Golden hopes to have a draft manuscript prepared by September or October, 1982 and a final report to EPA in early 1983.

Members of the Safe Drinking Water Committee are listed in Attachment 1. All are expected to participate in the review of asbestos in drinking water although some have no prior knowledge or experience in the field of asbestos and disease. None of the Committee members were on the original (1975) Committee and only Dr. Shellenberger was on one of the Subcommittees.

Dr. Golden was not aware of the recent studies of Sigurdson et al, Toft, and the comments of Ian Higgins, M.D. on the Kanarek et al studies. He was particularly interested in the AACPP-Crump critique of the Kanarek studies. Staff provided these studies; Golden, in turn, will transmit them to the Committee. Golden is aware of the EPA-sponsored Puget Sound census tract and case control epidemiological studies. He understands that the principle investigator, Dr. Lincoln Polissar, presented the findings at an unnamed meeting, but Polissar will not release the report to NAS.

When discussing the TCE-PERC issue, Golden announced he was the author of the acronym "SNARL" (suggested no adverse response level). He said EPA had prepared a new "health advisory" on TCE-PERC and was reviewing the results of a second animal bioassay. The results appear to be the same as the first i.e. PERC is carcinogenic in mice, non-carcinogenic in rats. A copy of the new PERC advisory was requested from EPA.

Staff will continue to monitor the NAS project through completion. If you have any questions in the interim, please do not hesitate to call.

JFW/ajb

cc: A. Kahn, Esq.
B. J. Pigg (AIA/NA)
Sir Neville Stack (AIA)
W. E. Smith, M.D.
Brian Commins, Ph.D.

copies to:

Executive Committee

L. Ambler
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ATTACHMENT 1

THE SAFE DRINKING WATER COMMITTEE

Dr. Daniel B. Menzel, Chairman
Dept. of Pharmacol.
Duke University Med. Ctr.
Durham, North Carolina 27710
(919) 684-3915

Dr. Edward Calabrese
Division of Public Health
University of Mass.
Amherst, Mass 01003
(413) 545-2797

Dr. Gary P. Carlson
Dept. of Pharmacol. & Toxicol.
Purdue University
West Lafayette, IN 47907
(317) 494-1412

Dr. Cipriano Cueto
205 Nelson Street
Rockville, Md. 20850
(301) 468-2500 (Office)
(301) 425-5785 (Home)
formerly with Clement Associates Inc.

[redacted]

Dr. John Emmerson
Lilly Toxicol. Labs.
Eli Lilly & Co.
Greenfield, IN 46140
(317) 467-4306

Dr. Michael Gallo
Dept. of Environmental & Community Med.
CM DNJ - Rutgers Medical School
University Height
Piscataway, New Jersey 08854
(201) 463-4530

Dr. Kristien Mortelmans
Microbial Genetics Department
333 Ravenswood Avenue
SRI International
Menlo Park, CA 94020
(415) 859-4312

Dr. Malcolm C. Pike
Dept. of Family & Preventive Medicine
Univ. of Southern California
Med. School
2025 Zonal Ave. PMB 201B
Los Angeles, CA 90032
(213) 224-7434

Dr. Thomas Shellenberger
Midwest Research Inst.
425 Volker Blvd.
Kansas City, Missouri 64110
(816) 753-7600

Dr. Thomas Shepard
Dept. of Pediatrics
University of Washington
School of Medicine
Seattle, WA 98195
(206) 543-3373

Dr. Hanspeter Witschi
Biol. Division
Oak Ridge Nat. Lab.
Oak Ridge, TN 37330
(615) 574-0801

STAFF

Dr. Robert J. Golden, Project Director
Board on Toxicology and Environmental
Health Hazards
National Academy of Sciences
2101 Constitution Ave.
Washington, D.C. 20418
(202) 334-2535