FILE NAME: JH

DATE: 1981 Oct 9

DOC#: JH018

DOCUMENT DESCRIPTION: Letter to James Hardie from J-M RE Sprayed Asbestos Insulation in Schools

AL103262176

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James F. Reis
Director, Asbestos Policy

October 9, 1981

Mr. Lionel C. Denmead
James Hardie Industries Ltd.
65 York Street
Sydney, N.S.W.
Australia 2000

Dear Lionel:

It was a pleasure seeing you and Michael again and discussing common problems we are encountering with the asbestos issue.

The subject of sprayed asbestos insulation in schools and other public buildings continues to be a major concern in both the United States and Canada. Since it is an emotional issue and deals with the health of children we have tried to direct our efforts for resolving the problem toward cooperating with the Environmental Protection Agency.

EPA has prepared two documents (copies attached) to assist school districts in identifying whether insulation materials contain asbestos and outlining a procedure to allow the school districts to make a knowledgeable decision whether to remove, encapsulate, or enclose the material or to just leave it alone.

Currently there are two lawsuits in the U.S. in which local school districts are attempting to recover the cost of removing the insulation from the insulation manufacturer. There is also a case described in the attached pages of the Asbestos Litigation Reporter in which the parents of pupils in a Pennsylvania elementary school are asking the court to order the school district to establish a trust fund to pay claims from students who may develop lung disease during future years as a result of their exposure to asbestos in the school. To date none of these cases have gone to trial.

As an aside, I do not remember if we ever advised you of the existence of the publication the "Asbestos Litigation Reporter." This publication is an independent journal which reviews asbestos related litigation in the U.S. Attached is a copy of the cover page and statement about subscription availability.

Lastly, we discussed the subject of labeling and the pressures by the Australian trade unions to have the word cancer included on asbestos and asbestos products. Enclosed is a copy of the label being used on asbestos bags shipped into the U.S. by Lake Asbestos. Johns-Manville does not use the word cancer in our label nor do we plan to add it unless required by law.

As I mentioned to you, our discussions with the Environmental Protection Agency have been directed toward creating a meaningful labeling program designed to inform not to scare. A typical label would be similar to the attached recommended label for AC pipe. It would warn against using certain dust generating work practices and then advise that the product contained asbestos locked-in a cement matrix. It would also direct the worker to follow proper work practices recommended by the manufacturer. The burden to develop and certify these work practices would lie with the manufacturer.

Lionel, I am not sure Maureen and I thanked you for dinner on Thursday. It certainly was enjoyable although the price I paid Friday morning was high. Also attached is a copy of the Farmer's Almanac which Maureen promised to Michael. I hope your entire trip was successful and safe.

Best regards.

Very truly yours,

James F. Reis

Enclosures

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