

February 12, 1966

James H. Sterner, M.D.
Medical Director
Eastman Kodak Company
343 State Street
Rochester, New York 14650

Dear Jim:

First let me thank you for the copy of your letter reporting the action of the Knudsen Award Committee. Incidentally, I have not confirmed my contributions to the balloting made by telephone, and I shall not do so now ex post facto, unless you want written evidence. However, I have my notes and will do so if you wish. You can let me know when you reply to my request in this letter. I have a very different, and more difficult matter to deal with.

As you may know, there is to be a Congressional Hearing on the lead problem sometime soon, perhaps by the middle of March, perhaps later. This hearing may be a very important one in a number of respects. Much depends on the manner of the presentation of the facts. The meeting in Washington left much to be desired by way of facts and attitude. As you know, I was very much displeased by certain features of it, but mostly because it was badly organized and badly conducted. Whether this was because of the inexperience of those in charge, or whether it was so intended, I am unable to be certain, but I lean toward the first view. In any case, the hearing must be more to the point.

I am marshalling the information in a direct and comprehensive manner, and I hope to be able to establish, clearly, the facts as I interpret them. It is possible, however, that I shall be put in the position of an advocate of the interests of the industries that have most to lose. The early history of the entire matter is known to me, and my position throughout the years, as a critical investigator, has been an open book within the hygienic community, and especially but not exclusively within the medical and physiological segment of industrial and environmental hygiene. Unfortunately, this is not the segment that is doing the talking and thinking in this matter, and the latter group seem to have been taken in completely by the Patterson thesis concerning the physical environment. Either they are in a state of near panic, needlessly, in my view, or there are other irrelevant reasons for their line of policy. In any case, there is need at the hearing of a medical voice, other than mine, and one that occupies a formal position of strength. You, in a number of respects, as a member of the Ad Hoc Committee summoned by the Surgeon General to consider this matter, as an authority in environmental health in A.M.A. (and for other reasons), are in an ideal position.

As one of the leaders in the Washington meeting, you are likely, I should think, to be asked to be present and to express your views. I should like you, if such is the case, to accept the invitation. And even if you should

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not be requested to attend, in the first instance, there are ways in which your participation can be assured.

I should be the last person to embarrass you, in any way, and I would not, in any circumstance, be willing to influence your views or your stance. I think, however, that I know where you stand, and in any case, there should be a responsible and formally unbiased medical opinion expressed in an unequivocal manner. The medical testimony that has been highly touted in this situation has been that of Harriet Hardy. Unfortunately, her discussion was wholly beside the point or points at issue. I am genuinely sorry to have to say this, and I will not be blunt about it, if I can help it, in any public situation. Harriet is a fine person, and I like her, and would not wish to injure her or her professional position. But it is just plain silly for her to take a position that implies that she and I are on opposite sides in this matter. For so it has been made to appear, and precisely because we have been talking about two totally different things.

But so much for the details, into which I need not enter. It is important at this time that the issue be clarified. I'd like you to be there. If this is impossible, I'd like your suggestion as to who might do the deed. I think you know that I am willing - and, I hope, able - to fight my own battles, but I do not relish, especially at this time in my life, being put in the position of defending either the irresponsible industrialists and their fortunes or, alternatively, adhering, passionately, to a poorly documented judgment on which my reputation is based. I would very much dislike being found to be mistaken, for I have made every effort not to be, and I have professional and scientific pride. But I would be deeply chagrined to be the victim of a hoax, in which an emotional reaction had supplanted evidence and judgment. Let me have your reaction to this as promptly as possible, and if I can properly be of any assistance to you, in any way, in arriving at or supporting a decision don't hesitate to let me know.

When you receive this I shall be at the address indicated below. Please answer me at that address.

Sincerely,

Robert A. Kehoe, M.D.
Apartment #308
Palm Worth Apartments
2850 S. Ocean Boulevard
Palm Beach, Florida

RAE:wp

Dictated but not read

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