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UNION CARBIDE CORPORATION

MINING AND METALS DIVISION

270 PARK AVENUE, NEW YORK, N. Y. 10017

November 11, 1974

Mr. John H. Marsh
Asbestos Information Association
1660 L Street, N.W.
Washington, D. C. 20036

Dear John:

Your memorandum of November 1, 1974, requested appropriate comments regarding the effect of occupational and environmental standards and adverse publicity on the U.S. asbestos industry to be used at the forthcoming Paris conference. Our business has suffered both from regulatory and adverse publicity problems, although by and large I feel that the regulatory concerns carry much greater weight than does adverse publicity. For example, because of the publicity associated with the Reserve Mining trial and the dumping of asbestos tailings into Lake Superior, one of our larger ceiling tile customers in that area discontinued use of asbestos in his product. This executive decision was made in spite of the fact that the manufacturer was in compliance with OSHA and EPA regulations.

One of the more significant problems with the present OSHA regulations deals with interpretation of who should receive medical examinations. As you know, the present regulations provide no quantitative nor cut off limit below which employees are not required to receive annual physicals. This regulation is a source of considerable consternation to occasional users of asbestos and, in general, rather than comply with the most literal interpretation of the regulations, they are seeking substitutes for asbestos. Often these substitutes produce an inferior product from a technical point of view.

One business that is in potential jeopardy is the tape joint business where the mainstay of this trade is asbestos-containing muds. Selikoff has been publicizing recently the dust hazards associated with sanding of tape joint compounds, which is obvious adverse publicity and there is concern that in some operations OSHA standards could not be met without the use of respirators. These circumstances have caused tape joint compound manufacturers to seek substitute materials to asbestos.

It is my general view that the publicity associated with asbestos health issues has had no detrimental effect on employee morale. I think much more damaging to employee morale is the loss of business and consequent loss of jobs.

Very truly yours,

JHM

W. C. Thurber
Product Manager - Asbestos

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