National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health
550 Main Street, Room 7033
Cincinnati, Ohio 45202

November 16, 1971

James E. Peavy, M.D.
Commissioner of Health
Texas State Department of Health
1100 West 49th Street
Austin, Texas 78756

Dear Dr. Peavy:

A recent N.I.O.S.H. survey demonstrated an extremely serious and critical occupational health situation at the Pittsburgh Corning Corporation Amosite Asbestos Thermal Pipe Insulation Plant in Tyler, Texas.

N.I.O.S.H. industrial hygiene surveys in 1967 and 1970 yielded grossly excessive fiber concentrations compared to current and proposed asbestos standards, and those results were forwarded to the company for appropriate action. Following requests for evaluation and assistance from the Texas State Health Department and the local membership of the Oil Chemical and Atomic Workers International Union, N.I.O.S.H. conducted a comprehensive industrial hygiene and medical survey during the week of October 26 to 29, 1971.

The survey pointed out major industrial hygiene deficiencies which included a grossly inadequate ventilation system and poor housekeeping practices. In August 1971, respirators were made mandatory in all areas concomitant with application for variance from the current asbestos standard; however, our survey personnel observed many employees with loose or unconnected straps. Also, there was no program for the fitting and maintenance of respirators. Again personal air samples yielded grossly excessive fiber concentrations in all production, finishing, and shipping areas.

N.I.O.S.H. medical questionnaires and examinations for rales and finger clubbing were conducted by our survey team on 63 employees in order to complement the X-rays and pulmonary function tests performed by Dr. George Hurst of the East Texas Chest Hospital in August 1971 at the request of the Pittsburgh Corning Corporation. One film was read as a pulmonary neoplasm by Dr. Hurst, and this diagnosis was confirmed following hospitalization. In addition, several films were read as possible

pulmonary fibrosis. However, Dr. Lee Grant, Medical Consultant to the Pittsburgh Corning Corporation, has delayed release of these films to N.I.O.S.H. and its expert panel of radiologists pending his personal review of the films. Even without benefit of the X-rays, 7 of 18 workers with greater than ten years employment at the Tyler Plant meet at least three of four criteria for asbestosis. These criteria include: (1) forced vital capacity below 80% of predicted, (2) dyspnea, (3) finger clubbing, and (4) rales. Positive X-ray results could increase further the number of cases of asbestosis. Reduced pulmonary function was also observed in a few workers with less than five years employment.

Therefore, medical follow-up of current and past employees is indicated. Immediate corrective action is necessary to reduce asbestos exposure levels to conform to existing standards.

Sincerely yours,

William M. Johnson, M.D.
Acting Deputy Director,
Division of Field Studies and
Clinical Investigations

Bobby F. Craft, Ph.D.
Acting Director,
Division of Technical Services

Encl. (Air Sampling Results; October, 1971)

cc: Marcus M. Key, M.D.
Mr. Charles Van Horne
Mr. J. B. Stokes
Mr. George Pettigrew, Region VI, N.I.O.S.H.
Mr. John K. Barto, Region VI, O.S.H.A.
Joseph K. Wagoner, S.D. Hyg.

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ANALYSIS OF PERSONAL SAMPLES

PITTSBURGH-CORNING ASBESTOS PLANT, TYLER, TEXAS

ASBESTOS PIPE-INSULATORS

OPERATION		SAMPLE	CONC. (FIBERS >5μ/cc)
Mixing			
	Feeder	45	54.04
	Feeder	139	105.83
	Feeder	117*	101.71
	Feeder	99*	169.7
	Scrap Feeder	106	9.58
	Feeder	60*	188.91
	Feeder	12*	92.77
	Feeder	57	26.4
	Feeder	82	9.14
	Feeder	132	22.5
	Feeder	29	37.6
Forming			
	Builder	18	40.93
	Builder	91	26.11
	Builder	103	14.61
	Builder	88	7.45
	Builder	119	9.42
	Builder	83	25.79
	Builder	85	42.77
	Relief Builder	105	22.33
	Builder	89	6.67
	Builder	121	25.53
	Builder	54	12.28
	Builder	25	57.72
	Relief Builder	71	35.24
	Builder	90	17.
	Builder	92	37.54
	Builder	120*	90.9
	Builder	110	70.36
	Builder	107*	103.97
	Relief Builder	111	30.43
	Builder	16*	134.41
	Builder	20	53.23
	Builder	14	44.31
	Builder	17	59.58
	Builder	53	42.99

	Relief Builder	27	72.12
	Builder	74	9.74
	Builder	15	64.35
	Builder	24*	111.15
	Builder	131	13.8
	Builder	136	9.9
	Builder	122	14.8
	Builder	101	26.9
	Builder	124	8.44
	Builder	65	56.45
	Builder	95	36.41
	Builder	58	14.75
	Relief Builder	56	24.27
	Builder	102	31.2
	Labor	52	11.26
Curing			
	Oven Tender	47	23.5
	Oven Tender	140	5.08
	Oven Tender	112	6.89
	Oven Tender	93	19.87
	Oven Tender	84	16.40
Finishing			
	Supervisor	68	20.38
	Wrapper	130	11.43
	Wrapper	98	37.45
	Finishing Laborer	1	30.43
	Utility-Finishing	3	48.53
	Utility-Finishing	66	12.03
	Wrapper	8	94.81
	Utility-Finishing	4	55.11
	Finishing Laborer	22	22.83
	Saw Operator	30	27.36
	Saw Operator	126	19.38
	Saw Helper	78	14.18
	Saw Operator	76	31.23
	Saw Operator	94	21.9
	SRL Saw	118	1.73
	Cutting Saw	51	91.76
	SRL Cutting Saw	55	40.28
	Saw Feeder	35	2.30
	Pine Machine Oper.	006*	208.42
	Saw Labor	007	97.26
	Saw Labor	116	6.59

	SRL Saw	134	25.97
	SRL Saw	141	1.96
	Saw Labor	109	11.62
	SRL Labor	26	91.52
Inspection			
	Box Marker	86	20.71
	Weigher	59	34.49
	Fork Lift Operator	2	11.71
	Packer	21	9.5
	Packer	42	1.84
	Shipping Supervisor	43	2.18
	Packer	10	13.08
	Fork Lift Operator	62	20.42
	Labeler	63	20.72
	Inspector	69	92.26
	Weigher	5	29.45
	Inspector	23	73.62
	Packer	9	3.83
	Packer	44	.71
	Weigher	125	6.8
Miscellaneous			
	Maintenance	75	32.08
	Utility	135	2.09
	Utility	133	8.36
	Maintenance	108	18.12
	Utility	39	30.38
	Maintenance	11	42.28
	Maintenance	13	26.81
	Maintenance	50	28.43
	Maintenance	64	37.54
	Sweeper	97	3.61
	Maintenance	123	2.10
	Maintenance	127	0.94
	Janitor	129	2.29
	Shipping	40	1.36
	Guard	73	1.94
	Guard	113	4.58
	Guard	72	0.64
	Supervisor	128	1.57
	Supervisor	080	14.92
	Supervisor	19	29.91
	Supervisor	79	6.28

Supervisor	77	24.25
Supervisor	104	25.2
Supervisor	115	2.28
Office Workers		
	154	0.04
	152	0.04
	158	0.03
	155	0.66

*=Approximate (too many to count)

Samples taken on October 26, 27, 28, 29, 1971