

ETHYL CORPORATION

INTER-OFFICE CORRESPONDENCE

TO	Mr. E. L. Shea	ADDRESS	New York
FROM	J. E. Boudreau	ADDRESS	New York
SUBJECT	Smog	DATE	January 12, 1956

"Smog is spreading, becoming a national problem.

"Nearly 18,000 communities are affected. Scientists suspect smog as causing serious diseases and know it sometimes can turn into a mass killer."

Sub-headline on Smog article
U. S. News & World Report--
January 13, 1956

The Los Angeles area today is the focal point of the ever expanding smog problem, and the factors that have arisen in that area together with the courses of action taken may be expected to form a pattern for future activities in other areas.

It is, therefore, most important that our company study in detail the overall problem and its definite tie-in with leaded fuels.

By way of background, we were thrust directly in the field of public interest in Los Angeles through a one-man crusade by Chandler Phillips conducted on an emotional basis and with a complete disregard of facts. To disregard the Phillips charges on that basis, however, could prove to be a tactical error with results reaching beyond the immediate Los Angeles situation.

Public opinion is not always based upon the acceptance of truthful principles or logical presentations. Far too often, wild and unfounded charges can affect mass thinking, particularly in cases where such charges involve a strong degree of self-interest and possibly result in mass self-betterment.

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It should also be established that acceptance of the Phillips approach is not a matter of low mental levels. Segments of all levels are concerned. We have a factual report that after a presentation by Phillips before a group of Jonathan Club members over sixty percent of the group remained after the luncheon to ask questions.

As the result of activities of Phillips, at least two neighborhood newspapers are now publishing a ballot poll "on the next general election ballot to set up a type of pure food and drug legislation to require gasoline manufacturers to meet specifications for a clean-burning, unleaded gasoline."

The only poll report we have received to date is from the Glendale Independent, indicating a vote of 377 to 2 in favor of such legislation.

From other newspaper accounts it appears that a citizens group favoring a public vote on the question is engaged in the task of obtaining 90,000 signatures of registered voters on petitions calling for the proposition to be placed on the ballot. We have no report on their progress.

Still another group is engaged in securing funds to buy TV time for Phillips. The campaign for raising funds is worked out in detail for soliciting fellow employees in business organizations after business hours.

The city authorities are also involved in the lead aspect. A public hearing was conducted on September 28, 1955 before the Assembly Interim Committee at which Dr. Lester Breslow, Chief of the Bureau of Chronic Diseases of the State Department of Public Health, testified.

I am in no position to pass judgment on medical testimony, but as a layman I gained the impression that Dr. Breslow indicated an honest lack of basic information on the lead-in-air problem.

Our customers are becoming increasingly interested in securing our counsel on that phase of the overall problem that involves our product.

We now have a direct request from Philip Magruder, Executive Vice President of General Petroleum. Mr. Magruder reported to Ted Littlefield that they had consulted their own medical people, but "Magruder considers Dr. Kehoe the top authority in this field and both he and his committee would like to sit down and discuss the situation with him."

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The committee referred to is the Air Pollution Control Committee of the Western Oil and Gas Association and consists of the vice presidents of manufacturing of seven major companies and two independents.

The Western Oil and Gas Association has also requested our aid, and there can be no doubt but that they need it.

It might be assumed that our customer organizations would provide some of the basic supporting data, but apparently that is not the case.

As an example, the Association wrote a local newspaper on November 18, 1955 in an attempt to refute the Phillips charges. The letter stated in part,

"Mr. Phillips is wrong when he claims 'Los Angeles gasolines are the dirtiest-burning in our nation.' Los Angeles gasolines do not have the highest lead content in the nation. They are in fact below the national average."

It is quite apparent that the association writer has no understanding of the meaning of the term "dirty gasoline."

Another example of their need was a statement referred to our local people for approval before publication which stated,

"Lead salts--most of which are lead bromide--are harmless to humans and plant life. You could sprinkle them on your food just like you do common table salt."

I would also like to call to your attention the fact that Phillips' material is being received from other sources, such as the Lead Industries Committee and from Tom Sullivan of Gulf. I think we may anticipate an increase in this correspondence.

In summation, I firmly believe that we have both a moral and practical obligation to come to the aid of our customers on that phase of the smog problem that involves our product.

From the point of view of both Public Relations and Customer Relations any other course would, in my opinion, be against the long-range interests of our company.

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In approaching this problem, the following recommendations are submitted:

1. That Dr. Kehoe meet with the medical advisors of our customers either individually or as a group.
2. That Dr. Kehoe meet with the Air Pollution Control Committee of the Western Oil and Gas Association in a frank discussion of the overall lead problem.
3. That Dr. Kehoe discuss the medical aspects of the problem with Dr. Lester Breslow, Chief of the Bureau of Chronic Diseases of the State Department of Public Health, provided such a conference conforms with professional ethics.
4. That Wayne Warren and Howard Hesselberg be available to consult with the Air Pollution Control Committee on the two broad fields involving the use of leaded gasolines.
5. That a member of the Public Relations staff be assigned to the problem on the West Coast for whatever period may be necessary.
6. That the Ethyl Corporation make every effort to confine its activities to consultant services to the petroleum industry, and that any approach to the public or the press be channeled through the Western Oil and Gas Association.

James E. Boudreau

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