FILE NAME: International Talc Company Inc (ITC)

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305 West Biddle Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21201
July 26, 1972

Mr. F. G. Kuehl
Vice President
International Talc Company
Box 296
Governeur, New York

Dear Mr. Kuehl:

I am the young engineer from the Baltimore County Health Department who attended the April Seminar on Asbestos at JHT with you.

The health effects, in particular the cancer potential, of talc exposure has so far received little critical study. Henderson et al. (J. Obstet. Gyn. 78, 266, 1971) examined tissue from women with ovarian and cervical tumors. In both conditions talc particles were found deeply embedded within the tumor tissue. No asbestos was found. Kleinfeld reported high incidence of lung cancer among talc miners in New York State (4 X expected) in Archives of Environmental Health, 1967. I have just written to him to ask if the tremolite asbestos exposure of these men is known.

What is needed now is a follow-up mortality study on workers who were exposed to talc which is as free from tremolite impurities as can be found. Good company and/or union records would be needed for several hundred workers. In cases where cancer was suspected or reported as a cause of death, autopsy reports and tumor tissue would be sought and examined by a pathologist. Hopefully some good statistical basis can be found for saying whether talc per se is a carcinogen or not.

Dr. Abraham Lilienfeld of the Johns Hopkins University, a renowned epidemiologist, has a keen interest in talc. The actual work would be performed by him and his associates. My role is to come up with a workable design for the study.

Therefore I am asking you to help me obtain a study group, either in your organization or another. I am sure you understand that your influence would be a great assist in obtaining the cooperation of company officials. I have no axe to grind, but simply want to resolve this issue by scientific appraisal of factual data.

If you would like to correspond directly with Dr. Lilienfeld, his address is Chairman, Dept. of Epidemiology, Johns Hopkins School of Hygiene and Public Health, Baltimore, Md. 21205.

As for asbestos, the Labor Department lightened the recommendations of NIOSH in adopting a 5 fiber/cc standard until July, 1976; when it will drop to 2 f/cc. Caution labeling will be on very few asbestos products. Enclosed is an article you may have read following promulgation of the new standard. Selikoff's language is pretty extreme, but I agree with his criticism of the standard as inadequate worker protection.

My best wishes in your work and I hope you can help out with the talc study.

Sincerely yours,

Barry I. Castleman