



A/C Pipe
Producers Association

Internal Correspondence

TO Public Affairs Committee
International Affairs Committee

FROM *J. F. Welch*
J. F. Welch, Director, Public Affairs

DATE April 29, 1981

SUBJECT Field Problem - Ocean County, New Jersey

REF: JFW correspondence, same title,

ACTION REQUIRED: Review for information

Enclosed are responses from state and federal officials to inquiries by New Jersey State Senator John F. Russo regarding the potential health hazards of A/C water pipe. These documents were obtained by special counsel. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call.

JFW/ajb

Enclosure

cc: A. Kahn, Esq.
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State of New Jersey

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

DIVISION OF WATER RESOURCES

P. O. BOX CN-029

TRENTON, NEW JERSEY 08625

ARNOLD SCHIFFMAN
DIRECTOR

FEB 18 1981

Honorable John F. Russo
Senate - District 9
Routes 166 and 37
Dover Mall
Toms River, New Jersey 08753

Dear Senator Russo:

Thank you for your telegram of January 12, 1981 inquiring about the use of asbestos in cement pipes. Commissioner Jerry Fitzgerald English has referred it to me for response.

Your suggestions are well taken and we are evaluating changes to existing state regulations governing use of asbestos-cement pipe.

We have also been testing water which flows through the cement pipes to determine corrosive characteristics which could result in the release of asbestos into the water. In those cases where this possibility seems likely, the pH has been adjusted to prevent such an occurrence.

In addition, the Department has begun to review the most recent health related studies. We have just received a study by the Epidemiology Division of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency entitled, The Need to Control Asbestos Fibers in Potable Water Supply Systems. In addition, we will be reviewing a recent large scale study of asbestos feeding in rats and hamsters. (W.E. Smith, Environmental Health Perspectives, 1980.)

Mr. Ray Barg will be able to answer questions about cement pipes containing asbestos when we have fully assessed the problem. You may contact him at the above address, or at (609) 292-6296.

Sincerely,

Arnold Schiffman
Director

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UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460

25 FEB 1981

OFFICE OF WATER
AND WASTE MANAGEMENT

Honorable Bill Bradley
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Bradley:

Thank you for your inquiry of January 27, 1981, on behalf of Senator John F. Russo and Assemblyman John Paul Doyle of New Jersey, in regard to asbestos-cement water pipes.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is actively investigating the potential health hazards associated with the use of asbestos-cement water pipes specifically under the authority of the Safe Drinking Water Act, as amended (42 U.S.C. §300f et. seq.). In addition, all aspects of asbestos risks to health are being investigated under the authority of section 6 of the Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA). The latter investigation includes an assessment of the possible risks posed by inhalation and ingestion of asbestos fibers associated with asbestos-cement pipe manufacturing, installation and use, as well as assessments of the risks from other asbestos exposure.

The newspaper articles cited by Senator Russo and Assemblyman Doyle may not have made the asbestos pipe situation quite clear. While the health hazard from inhaled asbestos in industrial exposures is confirmed, possible risks from ingested asbestos are still being examined. In 1977 the Safe Drinking Water Committee, National Academy of Sciences said the "available data with respect to orally ingested asbestos, through drinking water, does not suggest an immediate hazard to public health." Another point which may need clarification is the reporter's statement in regard to aggressive water. Our studies show that significant numbers of asbestos fibers are released from pipe only when the water is aggressive (corrosive).

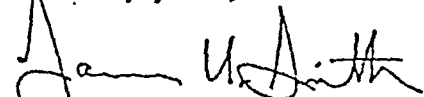
The EPA has not yet reached a definite position on the ingestion risk and hazards of asbestos-cement pipe, but research is continuing both with animal feeding studies and epidemiologic studies of human populations exposed to asbestos through drinking water. The initial results from animal studies being conducted at the National Institute for Environmental Health Sciences did not detect any adverse effects on the test animals from asbestos in the diet.

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Pending results from these and related studies, we agree that it is prudent to minimize exposure to asbestos in water, whether from natural sources or asbestos-cement water pipe. Since, as noted above, asbestos fibers are released from asbestos-cement pipe only when the water is aggressive, we believe the practical approach is to correct the aggressive tendencies of drinking water where such exist. Aggressive water not only attacks asbestos-cement pipe, but also may dissolve lead, cadmium or other harmful substances from other pipe materials. The Office of Drinking Water, EPA, recently promulgated regulations requiring public water systems to monitor for corrosivity (45 FR 57332). It is expected that the States, whose responsibility it is to administer and enforce drinking water regulations under the Safe Drinking Water Act, will direct appropriate corrosion-control measures, with our guidance, on a case by case basis.

I hope this information will assist you in replying to Senator Russo and Assemblyman Doyle.

Sincerely yours,



James N. Smith
Acting Assistant Administrator
for Water and Waste Management