FILE NAME: Talc (TALC)

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CHARLES McC. MATHIAS, JR.
MARYLAND

REPLY TO:
1616 FEDERAL BUILDING
31 HOPKINS PLAZA
BALTIMORE, MARYLAND 21201
(301)-962-4850

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20510

June 15, 1972

Mr. Barry I. Castleman
Technical Services Section
Division of Air Pollution and
Industrial Hygiene
Bureau of Environmental Services
Baltimore County Department of Health
Maryland Avenue and Hillen Road
Towson, Maryland 21204

Dear Mr. Castleman:

Please find enclosed a copy of a letter I have received from the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare relative to asbestos-containing products.

I hope the information provided in Mr. Meyer's letter will help to clarify some of the points you raised in your correspondence to the Food and Drug Administration in regard to this matter.

I was happy to have had an opportunity to be of assistance to you.

With best wishes.

Sincerely,

Charles McC. Mathias, Jr.
United States Senator

CM/esg

Enclosure

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND WELFARE
PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE
FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION
ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND 20852

JUN 7 1972

Honorable Charles McC. Mathias, Jr.
United States Senator
Suite 1616, Federal Building
31 Hopkins Plaza
Baltimore, Maryland 21201

Dear Senator Mathias:

This is in further reply to your letter of April 20 concerning asbestos-containing products.

The Food and Drug Administration is aware of the recent concern over the presence of asbestos-form particles in talc which may be used in food products.

Since there is some difficulty in identifying asbestos in talc because of their chemical similarity, we are now in the process of evaluating the available analytic procedures for determination of asbestos in talc. However, in the meantime we are moving ahead with analysis of products containing talc, with existing methodology, for the presence of asbestos-form particles. We are attempting to determine the degree of exposure by the average consumer to products containing these substances. We are also preparing a draft for a proposed provisional regulation for the use in foods of talc which is free of asbestos-form particles.

Funds for animal studies on the toxicological effects of talc have not been available. A memorandum of need is being developed to justify the needed funds for contract feeding studies on silicates, including talc.

The Bureau of Product Safety of the Food and Drug Administration has reviewed the NIOSH document "Criteria for a Recommended Standard ... Occupational Exposure to Asbestos" and the quotation Mr. Castleman gave from page V-3. We are unaware of any type of asbestos product, intended for use in the household, which could be expected to give rise to such concentrations of airborne fibers that its use would overwhelm the clearing mechanism. Since long-term exposure to levels contemplated by the standard would not be expected to overwhelm the clearing mechanism, the level contemplated by the quoted passage must be much higher.

FDA has at the present time no specific regulatory actions underway except the prohibition of use of asbestos as a component of general use garments. We are continuing to explore the possibility of hazard from other uses of asbestos-containing products in the home and methods for control of such hazards as are discovered, including in our consideration labeling, construction criteria such as resin-bonding, and if it should become necessary, banning specific as yet unidentified products, to control likelihood of release of airborne fibers of asbestos.

Thank you for your interest. Please let us know if we can be of further assistance.

Sincerely yours,

Gerald F. Meyer, Director
Office of Legislative Services

Enclosure
Constituent's letter

cc: Your Washington Office

