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Los Angeles County Medical Association

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November 11, 1953

Dr. Robert A. Kehoe
Kettering Laboratory
University of Cincinnati
Cincinnati, Ohio

Dear Doctor Kehoe:

On several occasions I have talked to you with reference to the smog in the Los Angeles area. As you possibly know, the Los Angeles County Medical Association is now backing the elimination of smog one hundred percent, inasmuch as it is the opinion of most of the physicians in this area that the smog is no longer a nuisance but is actually detrimental to the life of the people in this county.

The alarming increase in cancer in this area, the experimental work of Dr. Paul Kotin of the University of Southern California, and the survey of the physicians have convinced the Association that it is necessary to go to bat. However, the Air Pollution Control District under the direction of Colonel Gordon Larson, has, undoubtedly, performed a noble service and has made it possible for us to live here with the increasing number of industries which have come to this area. On the other hand, morbidity among the population and even reports by physicians of mortality resulting from air pollution, is becoming more prevalent.

Approximately two weeks ago, we had one of the most severe smog epidemics that the City and County have ever known. The absenteeism from the downtown businesses and closing of offices on its account was quite prevalent.

I recall several years ago when I was discussing with you the problem of lead arsenite as being a problem in gastroenteritis, prior to the advent of the chlorinated hydrocarbon pesticides, that you expressed the opinion that the serious problem was not the arsenic but the lead.

I have been asked to inquire of you whether you have made lead toxicity studies in the Los Angeles area. If so, if you would be in a position to divulge any information or point to the appropriate literature. It has been brought to the attention of the Association that approximately 12 tons of lead are utilized in the roughly 5,400,000 gallons of gasoline burned in this County per day. On the basis of the Public Health studies of the Holland Tunnel where the lead excretions of officers on duty was phenomenally large,

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we are wondering whether you have made any studies of street-level lead concentration in the Los Angeles atmosphere or excretions of individuals so exposed.

The next meeting of the Association Smog Committee is on Thursday, November 19, 1953, and any information that you could give would be greatly appreciated.

With kindest personal regards, I am

Sincerely,

Francis M. Pottenger, Jr., M.D.

Francis M. Pottenger, Jr., M.D.
Chairman, Smog Committee

FMP/rc

Please reply to

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Monrovia, California