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PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL

CAMBRIDGE

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TO: R. C. Walsh

DATE: October 12, 1983

FROM: H. A. Eschenbach

SUBJ: NIOSH/Tremolite Study

On 12 October 1983, I had a telephone conversation with Bob Wheeler of NIOSH concerning the progress of their study and our plans for a meeting on 14 or 15 November to get an update from them on their activities. During the conversation, Wheeler commented that he and Harlan Amandus had stayed at the same hotel as the McDonalds and Patrick Sèbastien while at the meeting on asbestos in Germany. He indicated that he and Patrick had intensive discussions and that the McDonalds had spent quite a bit of time in discussion with Harlan Amandus. This contact was apparently longer and of greater intensity that I had been led to believe previously by Sèbastien.

Wheeler also commented that after the meeting in Germany, he had gone to Edinburgh, Scotland to the Institute of Occupational Medicine. During his visit, he met with several people: Anthony Seaton, the Institute Director; Alan Jones, a researcher who is specializing in tremolite at this time who works for Jim Vincent, an old friend of Wheeler's; and Dr. Davis [no first name] who is soon to publish an article on tremolite toxicity in rats. Apparently, the institute, which is mainly sponsored by the National Coal Board of Britain, had done, last winter, an analysis of the tremolite content of vermiculite for a company in London named Razno. Wheeler was not told where the tremolite came from or any more about Razno and in fact he was somewhat reluctant to give me the name of this organization. A report was sent to Razno and Wheeler will send us a copy of that report. However, the covering letter, if he sends a copy at all, will be edited to delete pertinent names. In any case, two of the key paragraphs in that letter concern the pathogenicity of tremolite. Those two paragraphs as dictated on the phone are attached.

Wheeler also stated that the people at the Institute seemed to know a great deal about tremolite and it would be worthwhile for us to contact them as well as Dr. Wagner at the Pneumoconiosis Research Unit in Cardiff. Wheeler was unable to provide information about when the articles mentioned in the paragraphs will be published or where, but I would suspect that it would be in the next three to six months at the latest.

I agree

Wheeler has no objections to using his name if we chose to contact the Institute to get further information. However, we should be careful about revealing just how much information he has given us. I suggest that we review the documents which Wheeler is mailing to us today and then consider calling the Institute. If they seem to have a great deal of information, a visit may be advisable to determine just how their data affects our situation as well as the Libby study.

H. A. Eschenbach

HAE/gt

Report #2/83/DP/R/99

Note: On The Pathogenicity of Tremolite Asbestos

The Institute of Occupational Medicine in Edinburgh has recently completed a long-term inhalation study, using rats, on the harmful effects of tremolite asbestos with results which are to be published in the near future indicating that tremolite is a highly carcinogenic dust and probably more dangerous than any of the other asbestos types.

A similar study undertaken by Dr. J. C. Wagner at the Pneumoconiosis Research Unit, Cardiff and also awaiting publication has produced similar results. Because of its experimental findings, I feel it is most important that careful dust monitoring is carried out in any industrial premise where materials containing tremolite are used. Certainly any dust levels above the asbestos TLV of 1 fiber per millitre of air should be regarded as hazardous.

J. M. G. Davis
15 February 1983