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DOCUMENT DESCRIPTION: Memo to Mr. William Grantham RE Hazardous Substances Act - Asbestos in Talc

MEMORANDUM TO: Mr. William B. Grantham
FROM: EJEllsworth
SUBJECT: Hazardous Substances Act
DATE: July 30, 1971

Referring to our discussion of yesterday relative to the above indicated Act, I want to confirm the information that I have given you and some of the problems involved.

The matter of asbestos in talc is not only involved in this Act but also in the Pure Foods and Drugs Act. We are receiving requests for certification that our talc is not hazardous but according to the Law, as I have read it, talc is considered hazardous if the user works in a dusty environment. We are now investigating this thing more specifically.

I am enclosing a few copies of some correspondence that will give you something to think about, as it has us.

Of greatest importance is the request for a "threshold limit value". The U.S. Department of Labor publishes a "Material Safety Data Sheet (a copy of which I am enclosing). This was sent to us by our New Orleans agents, Mehaffey and Daigle, Inc., at the request of their customer Standard Paint and Varnish of New Orleans, a long-time user of DESERTALC®. We had a similar request from Sinclair Paints of Los Angeles. Accordingly, I asked Tom Remmers to check with the American Conference of Governmental Industrial Hygienists, which apparently is the laboratory tied in with the Department of Labor. The answer that we received back from them is quite disturbing as I think you will realize after you look through this file.

In the meantime, we are having Dick Lamar make further investigations because he has some questions that he wants to put forward. I have also sent another Certificate for the Cosmetic Corporation of America to Bill Fischbach for his verdict as to the extent of our involvement. I haven't heard from him yet. Finally, in today's mail we received a communication from Strauch Chemical, distributors in Chicago, which ties in with the information you secured from Johnson & Johnson.

I am also checking with the Department of Labor to get more information. We will not sign any Certificates that would involve us in the matter without your approval or subject to Bill Fischbach's approval if you want us to send it to him.

This is a very serious matter and I am trying to build up a file on it. In the meantime, I have asked everybody in the office here to refer all requests for information to me so that we can be consistent in the answers we give our trade. I suspect we will be getting many more inquiries and I will keep you informed. When it seems appropriate to discuss this matter in person, I think we should arrange to have Earl, Tom, and Dick Lamar included in a general meeting.

Enclosures

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