



A/C Pipe
Producers Association

Internal Correspondence

TO: Public Affairs Committee
International Affairs Committee

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

SUBJECT:

DATE:

March 26, 1981

Letter from EPA Office of Drinking Water

ACTION REQUIRED: Review for information

Enclosed is a letter from Joe Cotruvo (Director, Criteria and Standards) clarifying a quotation attributed to him by the Ocean County Reporter. Regrettably, Cotruvo's letter narrows the scope and beneficial impact his comments on the potential health hazards of asbestos in drinking water. Paragraph 3, embodies the continuing philosophy of the Agency i.e. that asbestos levels in drinking water, regardless of source, should be minimized.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call.

JFW/ajb

Enclosure

cc: A. Kahn, Esq.
N. Rahn, Esq.
N. Battle
M. Greenberg, Esq.
T. Joyce, Jr., Esq.
B. Hickey, Esq.
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UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460

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Mr. S. Wyatt McCallie
Senior Counsel
Johns Manville
Ken-Caryl Ranch
Denver, Colorado 80217

Dear Mr. McCallie:

In your letter of February 24, 1981, you included a quote from the January 24, 1981 Ocean County Reporter attributed to me to the effect that there is no reason "for suspicion that any cancer causes (sic) are linked with asbestos in drinking water." I have not seen the article in question but the statement is at least a misquote and it has been taken out of the context of my comments to the reporter.

In the conversation, I explained to him that the inhalation risk from asbestos was clear, but that the ingestion risk was still being debated. I explained that Selikoff's work had detected some increased GI cancer risk in asbestos - exposed workers and that one ecological survey in San Francisco claimed to have found increased risks relative to asbestos in water, but that several other drinking water studies had not shown correlations. I also said that, thus far the NIEHS animal study findings were negative.

I also told him that we recommended that asbestos levels in drinking water should be minimized - such as by corrosion control (pipe) and filtration (source contamination). He said that there were higher incidences of cancer in that community that were being attributed to asbestos in the drinking water, to which my response was that there was no evidence that would lead one to conclude that cancer cases in that community were related to the asbestos in the water.

I hope you will not perpetuate the possible misimpression in the story, that was attributed to me, while I was attempting to give the reporter a balanced perspective on the available information.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Joseph A. Cotruvo".

Joseph A. Cotruvo, Ph.D.
Director, Criteria and Standards Division
Office of Drinking Water (WH-550)

cc: Joseph C. Jackson

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