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6. FROM

A. Knight
Forrestal
Wash, DC

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Joan Rerek
(Signature of authorizing official)

(TIME)

3:00

Ak
P.A.L.

8. DATE

October 26, 1984

9. TO

Joe LaGrone, Manager
Oak Ridge Operations Office
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Oak Ridge, TN

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October 3, 1984

Honorable Marylin Lloyd
Rayburn House Office Building
Room 2334
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representative Lloyd:

As union officers representing workers at the Department of Energy's Oak-Ridge, Tennessee Y-12 and X-10 facilities, the Rocky Flats Plant in Golden, Colorado, the National Lead Uranium facility in Fernald, Ohio and the Piketon, Ohio uranium enrichment plant, we are writing to urge your support and co-sponsorship of H.R. 5971. This legislation, introduced by Rep. Tim Wirth, would "transfer to the Secretary of Health and Human Services the authority of the Secretary of Energy to conduct epidemiological studies of the effects of radiation and for other purposes."

The DOE's control over worker health studies is distorting important scientific research and eroding the confidence of DOE contract workers and the general public in the federal nuclear program. We are appalled at efforts by DOE and its contractors to misrepresent scientific findings to working people who unknowingly bear the daily risks of exposure to ionizing radiation and other substances. While we are being reassured by DOE and its contractors that there are no major health problems in the DOE work force, evidence to the contrary has been accumulating since 1974. This behavior clearly results from having the employer direct research which ultimately affects health and safety standards and related compensation. Energy Department research also affects the general public since their studies are used to determine radiation exposure standards for commercial nuclear power and medical applications.

The DOE and its' predecessor, the Atomic Energy Commission (AEC), have been studying the potential long-term effects of exposure to radiation and other substances on DOE contract workers since 1964, when the original contract was given to Dr. Thomas Mancuso of the University of Pittsburgh. In 1977, the DOE severed Mancuso's funds after he and his colleagues reported that the risks of radiation-induced cancer among some 30,000 workers at DOE's Hanford, Washington facility may be 10 to 30 times

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greater than current occupational exposure standards assume. The decision to fire Mancuso was made in 1974, after he refused to denounce an early study by the Washington State Health Department, which found excess cancer deaths among Hanford workers.

Mancuso's research was given to Battelle Northwest Laboratory (BNL), Oak-Ridge Associated Universities (ORAU) and Los Alamos National Laboratory. A 1978 investigation conducted by the House Commerce Committee on Health and the Environment revealed that Mancuso's study was turned over to researchers who had no substantial experience in occupational cancer epidemiology. The ORAU, BNL and LANL contracts were also issued without peer review and without prerequisite study designs -- standard requirements for research contracts issued by the Department of Health and Human Services. Moreover, the DOE contract officer who helped orchestrate Mancuso's firing left his job to direct the Hanford study for BNL.

In the course of the investigation, Congressmen Paul Rogers and Tim Lee Carter found that the DOE's justifications for firing Mancuso were "not supported" and that the decision to transfer Mancuso's research to "in-house" groups was "highly questionable at best." They concluded that the whole process reflected "serious mismanagement and is of highly questionable legality."

DOE's apparent lack scientific expertise and objectivity hasn't been helped by enthusiastic claims by some of their researchers that there is no association between radiation and disease. In a questionnaire to 224 former plutonium workers, LANL researcher Dr. George Voelz stated, "although we do not expect to find any evidence of any sort due to plutonium exposure, we are anxious to prove this is so.....please help us prove that exposures to low-levels of plutonium are not harmful."

In the past few years, DOE contractors have also publically misrepresented exceptional cancer findings at the Rocky Flats facility near Denver, Colorado and the Savannah River Plant, near Aiken, South Carolina. An independent panel convened by Colorado Governor Richard Lamm concluded in the spring of this year that the Rocky Flats Study was released in a way which "suggested that working at Rocky Flats was a particularly healthy activity" when, in fact the study had found a significant excess of brain tumor deaths when compared to the general public. Similar conclusions were reached by a panel of health experts convened by the DOE at the request of the states of South Carolina and Georgia relative to the Savannah River Plant (SRP). It was the unanimous view of this committee that efforts by the DuPont Co., (the operator of

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the SRP), to erase findings discovered in 1976 of excess lung cancers and leukemias among SRP workers were "inappropriate." Both panels have recommended that these research responsibilities be given to an independent public health agency. Moreover, DOE officials and contractors were aware of the Dupont findings since 1976 and failed to provide this information to a House Science and Technology subcommittee which was reviewing DOE's worker studies in 1982. In late 1983, a study was provided by DOE to a union official at The Oak-Ridge National Laboratory (ORNL) by ORAU on ORNL workers which concluded "there were no consistent trends of cause specific mortality with either external or internal radiation exposure levels." By contrast we have obtained documents generated by DOE epidemiological contractors in April 1982 and May 1984 which paint a much different picture -- one that indicates that serious health problems are occurring at several DOE nuclear facilities including ORNL.

o Workers at the Oak-Ridge National Laboratory, according to an ORAU Project summary, show a 49% excess of leukemia when compared to the general public. The summary states, "leukemia mortality did demonstrate a gradient with increasing radiation dose, but was associated with long-term employment in maintenance and engineering jobs:"

o In a "nested case-control" study of cancer deaths among workers exposed to ionizing radiation at ORNL it was found that "significant excess risk was found for workers in maintenance/construction and janitor/laborer job title groups."

o Data on employees who worked at the Oak-Ridge Y-12 Tennessee Eastman facility between 1943 and 1947 show, "significant excess deaths from lung cancer when compared to U.S. white male rates." A follow-up report states, "relative risk was found to increase with increasing of lung dose even after controlling for age, smoking status and other work place exposures."

o A mortality study of workers at the Y-12 weapons plant operated by Union Carbide Corp., has found "excess deaths for cancer of lung, brain, and CNS

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[central nervous system], Hodgkin's disease, other lymphatic tissue." Brain tumors among Y-12 workers, was reported by Dr. C.C. Lushbaugh at an "in-house" meeting of DOE researchers to be 100% to over 400% in excess of what's expected in the general public.

o An epidemiologic study of deaths among workers employed at the Oak-Ridge Gaseous Diffusion Plant, demonstrated "excess deaths due to lung and brain cancers and respiratory disease..." Enrichment workers exposed to nickel powder shows "excess deaths from cancers of the buccal cavity and pharynx..."

o At DOE's uranium processing plant in Fernald, Ohio, ORAU researchers report that "after taking age at diagnosis and age at hire into account there is an association between exposure to uranium and the development of non-malignant respiratory disease..." Furthermore "digestive cancers show a 36% excess..." which was "significant" among wage employees

o A study of 2,529 DOE workers in over 20 facilities who were reported to receive over 5 rems between 1947 and 1978 shows a "significantly elevated" excess for cancer of the rectum--3 times the national average.

Most significantly, the May 1984 ORAU Document states "radiobiologic and epidemiologic evidence suggest these risks may differ" from current studies which underlie radiation standards. The Summary also find that the worker studies also are "a basis for evaluating the efficiency of current radiation protection standards." If this is indeed correct, then research of such importance should not be subject to the conflicting interests that DOE has in nuclear promotion and public health protection.

Workers, who take these risks and who bear the burden of these illnesses should have the right to be fully and adequately informed. DOE's efforts to conceal and mislead the public about radiation risks brings into question the integrity and scientific objectivity of the federal nuclear program.

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In the final analysis, manipulation of important occupational health effects research may help the short-term interests of the DOE, but in the long run it can only undermine labor/management relations and public support for a strong national defense. For these reasons we believe that Dr. Mancuso and his research team should be given the funds to continue their studies on other DOE workers. We strongly urge that this problem be acknowledged and rectified by your efforts to make H.R. 5971 a law.

Robert G. Keil
Robert G. Keil
President
Atomic Trades & Labor Council
Oak-Ridge, Tennessee

Al O'Connor
Al O'Connor
President
Int'l Association of Machinists
& Aerospace Workers, District 34
Cincinnati, Ohio

Sincerely,

Jerry Harden

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President
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Rocky Flats, Colorado

D.W. Bloomfield
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President
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