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Honorable Mike McCormack
House of Representatives

Dear Mr. McCormack:

In response to your inquiry of July 21, 1975, ^{att.} regarding the medical histories of ERDA/AEC, military, or contractor personnel who have received overexposures of plutonium since 1942, I have enclosed three documents containing medical and relevant information on two selected groups of individuals who acquired depositions of plutonium occupationally. Two of the reports deal with a group of 25 workers who were exposed to plutonium during World War II while working at the Los Alamos Scientific Laboratory. All but a few were on military duty at the time of their exposure. This group has received thorough medical and health physics examinations at intervals since then. Of the 25 subjects included in the study at the time of the last estimate, 18 had depositions in excess of the maximum permissible body burden (MPBB). Relevant details of the exposure conditions and the follow-up are included in the enclosed reports.

A discussion of the second group of workers is included in the summary report of the United States Transuranium Registry. The cases included in that series had autopsy examinations, and the plutonium concentrations in their tissues were analyzed subsequently. A few cases in that series had deposition in excess of a maximum permissible body or lung burden.

Although precise information on the number of exposed workers in the industry is not available, it has been estimated recently that about 2,500 workers have experienced some internal deposition of plutonium. Of that number, 500 to 600 are believed to have incurred in excess of 25 percent of an MPBB and about 100 in excess of an MPBB.

At present, an epidemiologic follow-up study of workers in the industry who have plutonium deposition is in the late planning stages. This study will provide clinical histories and follow-up information for much of this worker population in a more accessible form than is now

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Mr. Mike McCormack

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available. At present, for most workers with internal deposition of plutonium, medical information can be acquired only by query of the plant medical files of the relevant contractors. That information is likely to be complete for currently employed workers but in most cases will not extend beyond the period of employment for terminated or retired workers. The files of the epidemiologic study will provide relevant medical information, including data on the current status of former employees when available.

I hope the enclosed information will be helpful to you. If I may be of further assistance, please let me know.

Sincerely,

1st Hal Hollister
James L. Liverman *for*
Assistant Administrator
for Environment and Safety

Enclosures:

1. Biomedical Follow-up of the Manhattan Project Plutonium Workers. L. H. Hempelmann et al.
2. Manhattan Project Plutonium Workers: A Twenty-Seven Year Follow-up Study of Selected Cases. Health Physics 25:461-479, 1973.
3. U. S. Transuranium Registry Summary Report to June 30, 1974, to USAEC Div. of Biomedical and Environmental Research, June 1974.

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