

Arlington Towers
Madison 706
Arlington 9, Va.

4 June 1959

HN-5-2

Dear Dr. Dunham:

Thank you very much for your letter of May 13, 1959; the data of Illinois well water are most useful.

I note that the 17th Semi-annual AEC Report (page 50) lists some preliminary data on radium retention in prisoners studied at the Stateville Penitentiary. Some five years have passed and although I know that these studies are not easy or quick, I wonder why there has not been a summary publication on these radium retention studies. I believe that I have checked the literature but I may be unaware of such a report.

In view of the May 4, 1959 report of the General Advisory Committee and the fact that this report pins its conclusion on the strontium-90 hazard to the radium hazard in drinking water, I believe it is urgent that these radium studies be given high priority. Surely after eight years of study the data on radium retention should be extensive. I realize that the correlation between radium body burdens and the incidence of bone sarcoma involves a minimum of 10^7 person-years for a conclusion to be approached on the radium hazard in drinking water. At least—at the level of radium retention expected for the Illinois studies.

I am sending you under separate cover a copy of the May issue of the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists in which my two articles on local fall-out appear. Due to space limitations both articles had to be compressed prior to publication. It took me since last summer to feel confident of the fission product decay data and the associated radiation dosage. It came as a surprise to me that the Effects of Nuclear Weapons handbook was so approximate in nature.

Sincerely yours,

R. E. Lapp
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