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MEDICAL DEPARTMENT

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July 23, 1976

Dr. James L. Liverman  
 Assistant Administrator for Environment and Safety  
 Energy Research and Development Administration  
 Washington, D. C. 20545

Dear Jim,


As you know, by copy of Ed Hardy's letter to me of 7-6-76, the repeated plutonium analyses on the urine samples of people living on Bikini obtained last April again showed about the same levels as previously reported in his letter of March 26, 1976. Disturbing also was the finding of similar low levels of plutonium in the urines of residents of Rongelap Atoll. One wonders if perhaps people living in other areas of the Marshalls, not directly involved in the fallout, might also show increased levels because of proximity to the proving grounds. We intend to check this. In the meantime we are collecting larger urine samples from individuals on Bikini and also pooled samples from Bikini as well as Rongelap, Utirik and Wotje from the latter atolls on the September survey. Analyses of other samples of dust, water, foods etc. obtained in April on Bikini are still in progress here.

Yesterday I received a call from John de Young, Office of the Territories, Dept. of Interior, saying that he had received word from their solicitor who had been in Majuro (Marshall Islands) stating that he heard reports there that plutonium had been detected in the urines of the Bikini people. I am not sure where they got the information. I suspect that George Allen, the lawyer for the Bikini people, will be happy to use the information, to embarrass us. I admitted to John that the report was true but pointed out that people all over the world have some plutonium in their urines including people in New York and that we had not been alarmed since the levels were low but that we were carrying out continuing investigation of this finding. Now that we have confirmatory evidence of this finding I would recommend that you write a letter to the Department of Interior with regard to the matter.

As suggested in my letter of May 27, 1976, you may wish to consider organizing a meeting with experts in the field to advise us with regard to this problem.

Sincerely,

Robert A. Conard, M.D.


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