



CONGRESS OF MICRONESIA

SAIPAN, MARIANA ISLANDS 96950

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SPECIAL JOINT COMMITTEE
CONCERNING RONGELAP &
UTIRIK ATOLLS

August 27, 1975

Senator Olympio T. Borja, Chairman
Representative John Haglelgam
Representative Ataji Balos

Robert Conard, M.D.
Associated Universities, Inc.
Brookhaven National Laboratory.
Upton, L. I. New York 11973

Dear Dr. Conard:

Senator Olympio T. Borja, who is currently traveling to several Asian countries on Congressional business, has asked me to contact you on behalf of the Special Joint Committee concerning additional compensation for the people of Rongelap and Utirik.

As indicated by the attached copies of correspondence, ERDA (formerly the AEC) and the Department of the Interior have indicated their general support of additional compensation for these people. We further anticipate hearings before the U.S. Congress, following transmittal of draft legislation prepared by Interior for introduction in the U.S. House and Senate. In anticipation of such hearings, and the likelihood that we will be testifying on this issue, we would like to have your preliminary opinions on several questions in order that we might present a unified position before any committee.

Our questions/concerns are as follow:

* Mr. Rice of DOTA, Interior, has raised the question of whether the lump sum compensation to affected Rongelapese should vary in amount according to the extent to which the people were affected. The Committee's suggestion is that each person who has had a thyroid removed, should receive \$25,000. However, he suggests that some are affected more than others and that, consequently, the amounts should be congruent with the damage caused. I also recall that you noted the thyroids of some Rongelapese have ceased to function because of their exposure, but that they have not been removed by surgery. Do such cases require special consideration, or should they be considered similar to those who have had their glands removed, since the end effect is the same?

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* Another question we would like to raise is that of eligibility. We are aware that some unexposed Rongelapese and Utirikese have developed thyroid abnormalities, or have had operations. How would you be prepared to testify on this question? Does current evidence and information allow you to differentiate between those abnormalities which are directly caused by exposure and those which possibly are "normal" developments? Can you support the assumption that some cases were not caused by exposure by indicating that they could not have resulted from exposure to low levels of residual radiation in the environment and food chain?

* Other questions which may be raised are: What about compensation for those two cases who experienced retarded growth, and should compensation be considered for those women who experienced what appeared to be an unusually high rate of miscarriages two to three years after exposure?

* We are certain that you will be asked to comment upon the connection between _____'s death from leukemia, and his exposure. Do you feel that there is sufficient evidence to support this connection, or in the absence of sufficient medical data, that the probability in terms of statistics is very great that there was a direct connection?

* Related to the above, what are your best estimates of the likelihood of encountering additional thyroid or leukemia cases in the future, as well as any new developments which are directly exposure-related?

* It has been recently indicated that survey results of Bikini have resulted in a reevaluation and reconsideration of safe exposure levels there, and that the Bikinians may not be able to return as planned. In light of this recent development, is there any need to reevaluate scientifically the criteria which led to the decision to return the Rongelapese to their island?

These are just some of the questions which come to mind at this time. We present them for your consideration with a view to cooperating and coordinating any presentation before the U.S. Congress and between the Congress of Micronesia, the Department of the Interior, and Brookhaven. In sum, we believe that it would be most effective if all parties involved were in agreement on certain basic issues when submitting testimony before U.S. Congress.

If you should have any further questions or need any additional information regarding the issues raised here, please let me know. We look forward to your response at your earliest convenience, and also look forward to receiving copies of your 20-year summary report when available.

Sincerely yours,

Brian Farley
Staff Member, Special Joint Committee
Concerning Rongelap & Utirik Atolls

cc: Director Health Services, TTPI
Mr. Emmett Rice, DOTA
Mr. James L. Liverman, ERDA

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