DEFENSE NUCLEAR AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20305

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GOVERNOR'S OFFICE
STATE OF UTAH

Honorable Scott M. Matheson
Governor of the State of Utah
Salt Lake City, Utah 84114

Dear Governor Matheson:

Your letter to Secretary Brown of January 2, 1979, requesting information in Department of Defense (DoD) files pertinent to the possible relationship between public health in Utah and Nevada nuclear weapons testing in the 1950's, was forwarded to the Defense Nuclear Agency (DNA) for primary action.

The corporate knowledge of the DNA staff concerning atmospheric nuclear weapons testing is extensive. Additionally, the DNA libraries at our headquarters in Alexandria, Virginia, and at the DNA Field Command at Kirtland Air Force Base in Albuquerque, New Mexico, are the most comprehensive atmospheric nuclear weapons test libraries in DoD. We also have direct access to the DoD Information and Analysis Center (DASIAC) system which can access related documents in a variety of other locations. Thus, DNA is the DoD organization most suited to providing assistance concerning the DoD aspects of nuclear weapons testing, and I am pleased to have the opportunity to respond to your request on behalf of DoD.

I might take a moment at the outset to describe two related projects which DNA has been directing for the past year in an effort to explore concerns over the possible long-term biomedical effects of low-level exposures to ionizing radiation.

In mid-1977, it became apparent that there might be an increased incidence of leukemia among former military participants in Nuclear Weapons Test SMOKY (Nevada Test Site, August, 1957). By December, 1977, the Center for Disease Control (CDC) had embarked upon an epidemiological study of SMOKY participants; DNA and the Army had formed an ad hoc

committee to support the CDC work; and DoD, along with the Department of Energy (DoE) and the Veterans Administration (VA), had requested the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) to conduct a morbidity-mortality study of DoD participant groups selected from various atmospheric nuclear weapons tests conducted between 1945 and 1962. In January, 1978, DNA was designated the DoD Executive Agent for all matters pertaining to DoD personnel participation in atmospheric testing; and a new organization for this purpose was established in DNA and in each of the Military Services. This organization is conducting DoD's "Nuclear Test Personnel Review" (NTPR) program, which is designed: (a) to reconstruct the test events in detail, including personnel rosters for DoD participants, identification data, and radiation dosage data; and (b) to support or sponsor medical follow-up studies, such as those of CDC and NAS, to advance scientific understanding of any long-term biomedical effects.

An additional significant effort was initiated by a White House memorandum of May 9, 1978. The memorandum tasked the Department of Health, Education and Welfare (HEW) to coordinate a uniform Administration approach to problems associated with exposures to ionizing radiation. This expanded effort encompasses all ionizing radiation sources, including exposures connected with the nuclear power industry, exposures from Naval nuclear propulsion systems, radiation dosages incident to industrial processes and manufactured products, exposures from uranium mine tailings used in building materials, and doses resulting from medical and dental diagnostic and therapeutic practices, many of which represent potential concerns of considerably greater magnitude than those from atmospheric nuclear testing. Again, DNA was designated the DoD Executive Agent, and we have been working with the Interagency Task Force on Ionizing Radiation for many months to formulate a major report for the President.

In regard to your specific request to Secretary Brown, you have asked that we assume responsibility for identification of pertinent information in the files of DoD and constituent organizations, and for release of that information. You have also requested that any restricted documents be identified so that you may initiate procedures for declassification.

DNA will be pleased to identify the information you have requested to the best of our ability. We will also determine the most expeditious procedure for making the information

available to your staff. Where there are limitations involving DoD authority and resources, we will coordinate the effort with other concerned organizations. As you noted in your letter, close cooperation is essential. While we can and will identify the information we believe is pertinent to your effort, a more precise definition of your needs can result from a collaborative effort between the DNA staff and Utah officials.

As regards restricted material, DNA can arrange for the declassification and release of most DoD-originated documents, unless, of course, the security classification is current and valid--in which case we will explore the material in detail to see if we cannot declassify pertinent excerpts. Documents in DoD files that were originated by other departments must be declassified and released by the originating organization; however, DNA will attempt to coordinate the declassification and release efforts between departments, if you desire.

The types of documents available are numerous. We should be able to identify specific test information on fallout, including on-site radiation safety reports, off-site radiation safety reports, fallout patterns, fallout intensity measurements at a variety of on-site and off-site locations, fallout particle size distribution studies, meteorological data reports, and other associated documents. On the other hand, I am not sure we will be able to respond intelligently to your request for all information on long- and short-term effects of radiation on life forms. This may involve such an undefined and voluminous search and accumulation as not to be achievable in a practical sense. In this area particularly, we will need the help of your staff in defining your needs more closely.

There are two other pertinent factors that are appropriate to mention at this time. First, we obviously could not release our only copy of original documents that are necessary for our own NTPR research. This necessitates that we take the time to copy the documents before making them available. Second, declassification is also an extremely time-consuming process, especially if it involves a large number of documents. Again, a more precise definition of your needs is essential for efficient response to your request; and, if an extensive effort is indicated, special budgetary action may be required.

Honorable Scott M. Matheson

My project officer for the NTPR effort, Lieutenant Colonel (LTC) Bax Mowery, Office of the Biomedical Advisor, Headquarters, Defense Nuclear Agency, Washington, D.C. 20305, telephone 202 325-7064, has contacted Ms. Maggie Wild of your staff. LTC Mowery is providing Ms. Wild, under separate cover, an initial bibliography of documents that may be pertinent to your needs. The bibliography is separated according to classified and unclassified documents. It is also subdivided by DoD-originated documents and those originated by other organizations, principally the Atomic Energy Commission (AEC)--now DoE. Copies of the portions of the bibliography listing AEC-originated documents are also being sent to DoE for future reference. We can, of course, provide documents from the unclassified, DoD-originated list in a relatively easy manner. Others will be more difficult and time-consuming. After your staff has reviewed the bibliography--and at Ms. Wild's request--I propose that LTC Mowery visit your office to help develop a more precise definition of future action.

I hope this approach is acceptable and responsive to your needs. If I can be of further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me directly.

Sincerely,

R. R. MONROE
Vice Admiral, U. S. Navy
Director