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| US DOE ARCHIVES | |
| RG | 326 AEC |
| Collection | L Joe Deal |
| Box | 13 |
| Folder | MARSHALL ISLANDS 1979-1980 |

August 21, 1979

Mr. Theodore Mitchell
 Executive Director
 Micronesian Legal Services
 Corporation, Suite 300
 1424 Sixteenth Street, N.W.
 Washington, D. C. 20036

Dear Mr. Mitchell:

The Department of Energy is pleased to respond to your letter of August 3, 1979, in which you requested copies of a number of records pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act. The following responses are numbered to coincide with your numbered requests.

* Item No. 1. The statement is based upon testimony presented by Messrs. DeBrum, Weissgall, Deal, DeYoung and Mrs. Van Cleve, and others at Hearings before Subcommittees of the Committee on Appropriations, House of Representatives, on April 12, May 22, and June 19, 1978. Copies of pertinent portions of that testimony are enclosed (Tab A). Additional relevant information is available in the Hearings testimony conducted by the Subcommittee on July 25, 1978. We do not have a copy of the final transcript of this testimony.

Reports from Brookhaven National Laboratory indicated that the Cesium-137 levels of Bikini residents increased with time until 1978, and decreased thereafter (post-relocation). These data were based upon whole body counting measurements. A summary of this information is enclosed (Tab B). This increase in body burden coincided with increased availability of locally grown terrestrial foods, particularly coconuts. The Cesium-137 measurements suggest that either the quantity of imported food available to the people or the quantity of available imported food consumed by the people was below that level needed to moderate the increase in Cesium-137 body burdens as locally grown foods became available.

Item No. 2. The aerial photographs of Bikini Atoll (which I believe have previously been sent to you) show that the Bikini and Eneu Islands are separated by approximately five miles of reef. At low tide it is possible to walk from one island to the other. Considering the facts

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Mr. Theodore Mitchell

- 2 -

August 21, 1979

that the island of Bikini is the longed-for home of the Bikini people, that houses already exist on the island, and that tens of thousands of coconut trees are on the island, we feel that it is valid to raise the question of whether or not access to Bikini Island can be controlled if the people reside on Eneu Island. (See also previous comments of Mr. DeBrum.) There are no other records covering the request in Item No. 2.

Item No. 3(a). The Department of Energy has no records bearing upon this subject. Inquiries of this subject presumably should be directed to the Department of Interior.

Item No. 3(b). Please refer to the Brookhaven National Laboratory information provided in (1) above. If body burden levels of Cesium-137 were to be equal to or greater than 3 μCi , it would be expected that radiation exposure levels at or above 500 millirem per year would result. This assumption is based upon Publication 2 of the International Commission on Radiological Protection (Report of Committee II on Permissible Dose for Internal Radiation). In that publication it is stated that the maximum permissible body burden of Cesium-137 (assuming that the total body is the organ of critical reference) for occupational exposure is 30 μCi (see Tab C). Since the occupational exposure limit is 5 rem per year, the body burden of Cesium-137 resulting in an exposure level of 1/10 of 5 rem per year (i.e., 500 millirem per year) is 1/10 of the 30 μCi value, or 3 μCi .

Item No. 4. Lawrence Livermore Laboratory (LLL) currently is in the process of preparing technical articles for publication in the scientific literature addressing these issues. Consequently, the articles as such do not yet exist, and the Department of Energy obviously does not possess them. However, enclosed (Tab D) is a copy of information which the Lawrence Livermore Laboratory sent to the Department of Energy consisting of the food concentrations of radionuclides which LLL used in calculating the dose estimates under discussion.

Item No. 5. The substance of the request addresses the basis of the decision to employ the Federal radiation guidance. The most relevant basis for this is the Federal Radiation Council guidance as presented in the Federal Register over the signatures of Presidents Eisenhower and Kennedy.

The text on page 6 and footnote 10 on the same page address the AEC recommendations for planning at Enewetak, the bases for which are in the Environmental Impact Statement.

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Mr. Theodore Mitchell

- 3 -

August 21, 1979

Item No. 6. Lawrence Livermore Laboratory (LLL) is in the process of preparing this document. It is not yet available. The dose estimates were provided by LLL, however, and copies of what the Department received are enclosed (Tab F).

Item No. 7. In response to your FOI request in Item No. 7, the records you requested are at the Lawrence Livermore Laboratory. They are in the process of being assimilated. As soon as they are forwarded here, it will be determined whether they can be released and you will be promptly notified. We anticipate no problems at this time.

Item No. 8. Risk estimates of somatic or genetic consequences of various radiation exposure levels were not made. Risk estimates for some of the radiation exposure values identified (i.e., 170 millirem per year and 5000 millirem per 30 years) are given in the summary statement of the National Academy of Sciences-National Research Council's Report of the Advisory Committee on the Biological Effects of Ionizing Radiation (Tab G)

The Atomic Energy Commission Task Group Report published in the Enewetak Environmental Impact Statement, Volume II, Tab B, pages III-11 and 12 provides a somatic risk assessment for a radiation exposure of 250 millirem per year, the recommended radiation protection criteria for the whole body and for bone marrow.

Item No. 9. No such documents exist.

We trust that this information is responsive to your request.

Sincerely,

Bruce W. Wachholz, Ph.D.
Office of Environment

7 Enclosures

- bcc: Mrs. Van Cleve, DOI
- Mrs. Clusen, ASEV
- Mr. Hollister, ADASEV
- Mr. Whitnah, OMS
- Dr. Weyzen, OHER
- Mr. Deal, OESD
- Mr. McCraw, OESD
- Mr. Brown, OGC
- Mr. Gelband, AD-44

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