



United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20240

JUN 12 1978

Dr. James L. Liverman
Assistant Secretary for Environment
Department of Energy
Washington, D.C. 20545

Dear Dr. Liverman:

This is a followup to the telephone conversation Mr. John E. deYoung of my staff had on June 9, 1978, with L. Joe Daal, Assistant Director for Field Operations, Division of Operational and Environmental Safety, on the urgency of obtaining laboratory analysis of food samples from Eneu Island and an up-to-date report from the Department of Energy on the possible use of this island by the current residents of Bikini Island.

The residents officially have requested the High Commissioner to procure this information for them since they do not wish to leave Bikini Atoll. You will recall that experimental food gardens were established by D.O.E. last autumn on Eneu Island. Some of the Bikini Island residents have been working in these experimental gardens and they cannot understand why D.O.E. doesn't have any results available, other than a sampling of some 15 coconuts. Mr. Daal also in his testimony to the House Interior Appropriations Subcommittee at the May 22, 1978, hearing, referred to "food samples and other crops that are now in the pipeline being analyzed". He stated that the results would be out in a few months.

In view of the reluctance of the residents to leave Bikini Atoll, it is imperative that we furnish them and the Subcommittee an up-to-date analysis of the situation on Eneu Island within the next sixty days. The Bikinians have asked the High Commissioner to delay a decision on the site for a temporary relocation until such an analysis is available.

Therefore, I am requesting that D.O.E. give this matter the highest of priorities. Representatives of the Bikinians will be present at the June 19, 1978, House Interior Appropriations Subcommittee hearing on Bikini, and this matter obviously will be raised at that time also.

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As you doubtless know, we have already taken the public position that Eneu is unsafe, and that it ought not to be used as an alternative to Bikini. With D.O.E.'s concurrence, I stated the following on May 22 before the House Appropriations Subcommittee:

"The Committee will recall that when we testified before you a month ago, we anticipated, on the basis of the best information then available to us from the Department of Energy, that if it were necessary to move the people of Bikini Island to an alternative, safe site, we could expect that the nearby island of Eneu would be available for that purpose. Last Thursday we learned that tests of a limited sample of foodstuffs growing on Eneu showed an uptake of radionuclides such in excess of those predicted on the basis of the known cesium and strontium content of the soil. Accordingly, we have concluded that we must eliminate Eneu as an alternative site".

"The test results reported by the Department of Energy lead the Interior Department and the Government of the Trust Territory to two conclusions: we must move all of the current residents of Bikini Island off that island, as quickly as we are able to do so; we must not move them to Eneu, as had been the Bikinians' hope and ours".

If the foregoing conclusions concerning the unavailability of Eneu are not correct, we must know that fact promptly. The information we received from D.O.E. in May supported the above categorical statements. If there is any doubt from D.O.E.'s standpoint as to the conclusion stated concerning Eneu, we clearly need to know of it promptly. Any comments you can offer prior to our hearing scheduled for June 19 would be helpful. We shall hope to hear from you by then.

Sincerely yours,

MRS. RUTH G. VAN CLEVE
Mrs. Ruth G. Van Cleve
Director
Office of Territorial Affairs



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WASHINGTON, D.C. 20240

JUN 12 1970

Honorable Sidney R. Yates
Chairman
Subcommittee on Interior
House Committee on Appropriations
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman:

At the hearing on Bikini on May 22, I promised to apprise you by June 12 of the results of the visit of the High Commissioner to Bikini to meet with the people living there and to learn their preference for relocation from Bikini Island.

High Commissioner Minkel has telephoned to report that their first preference is to remain on Bikini Atoll. The Bikinians ask that the time between now and the date they must move from Bikini Island be used for additional studies by the Department of Energy to determine more definitely whether or not Eniwé is a suitable alternative. We have asked DOE to complete its tests promptly.

The Bikini Island residents expressed great concern about moving anywhere else in the Marshalls, because to do so would "intrude upon the rights of others." If they must leave Bikini Atoll, they have asked the High Commissioner to designate the site. He currently believes that the final choice should be Jaluit or Kili.

Mr. Minkel and I will discuss in detail the results of his trip to Bikini, Kili, and Jaluit with you and the Committee at the June 19 hearing.

Sincerely yours,

Mrs. Ruth G. Van Cleve
Director
Office of Territorial Affairs

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