



UNITED STATES
ENERGY RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION
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DOSE COMMITMENT - BIKINI RESETTLEMENT

In June 1975, a detailed radiological survey was conducted of the two main islands of Bikini Atoll. This survey was necessary because:

1. There were no current radiation exposure estimates for Bikini Island residents who were returning in increasing numbers.
2. The Trust Territory government asked for advice relative to planning construction of additional houses and community buildings on Bikini Island.

Tentative survey findings were provided to Trust Territory officials and to the people of Bikini during August and September 1975. In brief, the conclusions were:

1. With few exceptions, foods grown on Bikini Island should not be consumed.
2. Groundwater on Bikini Island should not be used for drinking or cooking.
3. Although under the above conditions, residence on Bikini Island should present no undue risk, it would be prudent and advisable to plan for the permanent resettlement to shift to Eneu Island.

A draft report containing revised dose projections for Bikini Island residents based on all available data to date shows that people living on Bikini Island and eating locally available foods will receive whole body radiation doses in the range of 17 to 29 Rem in 30 years and those living on Eneu about 5 Rem in 30 years. These values may be compared with the current standard of 5 Rem in 30 years. Furthermore, recent information from Brookhaven's in-vivo measurements of Bikini Island residents shows average ¹³⁷Cesium body burdens higher by an order of magnitude than those seen in 1974. A few individuals are at or above the maximum permissible body burden of 3 μ Ci which gives an exposure

equivalent to the standard of 0.5 Rem/yr. Thus, the standard for annual whole body exposure of individuals in the population is being exceeded for these persons from internal ¹³⁷Cesium alone.

We know that people are eating certain foods grown on Bikini Island that were to be excluded from their diet and that ERDA's recommended restrictions of 1975 are not being implemented. The data we now have in hand raises serious questions on whether these past recommendations and restrictions for Bikini resettlement are adequate to limit exposures to acceptable levels. A strong case can be made to recommend against any return to Bikini Island for the present. Return to Eneu can be recommended provided it is acceptable for exposures at or near current standards to be received.

We have been asked to provide the new DOI Director of Territorial Affairs, Mrs. Van Cleve, a briefing on our Pacific activities on or about June 2. During that time, the new High Commissioner and other officials of the Trust Territory will be in Washington and New York for the annual meeting of the U.N. Committee on Trust Territories. Also, Gail Bradshaw has asked to be brought up to date on Pacific matters. We propose to set up a briefing for you and Public Affairs during the week of May 23, 1977.

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