



# United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20240

July 6, 1979

Mr. Jonathan Weisgall  
Covington and Burling  
888 16th Street, NW.  
Washington, D.C. 20006

Dear Mr. Weisgall:

You will recall that during the June 13, 1979, meeting with the Bikini Delegation you raised a question on behalf of the Bikini-Kili Council as to whether some of the 145 residents of Bikini who were relocated last August from Bikini may have had higher "body counts" as a result of having been also involved in the 1954 Rongelap Bravo Fallout.

This item was summarized in Item No. 10 of the "Notes" distributed on the June 13, 1979, meeting. During the discussion you stated that it had been reported to you that perhaps up to 40 of the 145 people living on Bikini Island on August 1978, may also have resided on Rongelap Atoll at the time of the March 1, 1954, Bravo Fallout.

Mr. Tommy McGraw, I think, explained the situation with respect to the body burden aspect adequately, although I have asked Dr. Walter Weyzen also to comment on this question.

There is one aspect which I believe needs clarification although I did not wish to dwell on it during our meeting.

As you know, there were only 86 individuals exposed at Rongelap and Ailingnae during the March 1, 1954, fallout. Additionally, four of these were "in utero". Twenty-one individuals of the original group have died, leaving an exposed living Rongelap-Ailingnae population of 65 individuals. These individuals are examined regularly by the Brookhaven Laboratory Medical team and their residence location is kept up to date. On a 1977 list of the Rongelap-Ailingnae exposed individuals we have, we can identify only one Rongelap individual, i.e., Titikoj Laurem, with family of five, who was living on Bikini Island in 1977.

In any event, Brookhaven National Laboratory has a roster of the Rongelap exposed individuals and their places of residence. There is also a roster of evacuees from Bikini Island, who have been examined, and I am asking Dr. Hugh Pratt to have these lists checked to determine how many

cc: Dr. Walter Weyzen

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individuals might conceivably have been on Rongelap in 1954. It seems very doubtful though that 40 individuals out of the remaining 65 Rongelapese could have been living on Bikini Island in 1977-1978.

I believe we should clear up this matter since it could lead to misunderstanding in the future.

Sincerely yours,

RUTH G. VAN CLEVE

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

  
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