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UNITED STATES
ENERGY RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20545

April 30, 1976

Alfred D. Starbird
Assistant Administrator
for National Security

PACIFIC AREA PROGRAMS

Some of the activities of the Off-Continent Test Readiness Program have been closely associated with several important AES Pacific area programs derived from nuclear testing at Bikini and Enewetak Atolls. As I understand your plans for reducing the Readiness Program, the reduction will have little impact on our programs. However, you should be aware that the AES programs have placed, and are planning to place, much reliance on the services provided by and the support of Nevada's Pacific Area Support Office (PASO). The primary purpose of this office has been to provide for Johnston Atoll, a DNA installation, the operations and maintenance expertise related to overseas testing of the NV contractor, Holmes and Narver, Inc. (H&N). At the same time our programs have been able to utilize the management base of PASO and the logistics base of H&N to provide effective and economical support. We have appropriately reimbursed NV for the services received, and since there is now no plan to close PASO, we intend to continue such an arrangement.

The following are our Pacific area programs:

1. The Brookhaven Medical Program

This is our continuing medical surveillance of the people of Rongelap and Utirik who were injured by fallout from the Bravo event of March 1, 1954.

Expected duration: more than 10 years.

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2. Radiological Support to Enewetak Cleanup and Resettlement

ERDA continues to bear the responsibility accepted by the AEC to advise and assist the Departments of Defense and the Interior in the continuing efforts aimed at early resettlement.

Expected duration: at least 5 years.

3. Environmental Surveillance

This is a long-term effort to monitor the presence, removal, transfer, uptake and decay of radioactive residue of the atmospheric test program. It takes on increasing importance as resettlement of the two test atolls approaches.

Expected duration: more than 10 years.

4. The Mid-Pacific Marine Laboratory

This laboratory, operated for ERDA by the University of Hawaii, is situated at Enewetak. For 22 years it has studied this coral atoll with emphasis in recent years on the distribution and cycling of radionuclides and potential implications to man of these processes.

Expected duration: indefinite.

5. The Marshall Islands Research Vessel (R. V. Liktañur)

This ship, an Army LCU, funded by ERDA, is under the operational control of PASO and is used in support of all of the above programs.

Expected duration: indefinite.

I know that you and the DNA are concerned about protecting the large capital investment which the two agencies have jointly in Johnston Atoll. I also understand that consideration is being given to continuing the reimbursable involvement of NV and its contractor in the

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operation of Johnston even though there is not a direct weapons program use of that Atoll in prospect for the near future. It appears that such continuation makes good sense from a national interest standpoint and even more that our ERDA interests would be severely impacted if the existing Pacific support base were not continued. I urge that you and your staff recognize the high importance we place upon our Pacific commitments and that in evaluating the future Government/contractor role in that area you take full account of our programmatic needs, which are non-weapons in character, but which result directly from atmospheric testing in the Pacific.

/s/ James L. Liverman
James L. Liverman
Assistant Administrator
for Environment and Safety

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