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Agreement Between The United States Department of Energy and
The Trust Territory of The Pacific Islands Regarding Medical Care of the
Rongelap and Utirik People

The United States Department of Energy (DOE), formerly ERDA and AEC, has for nearly twenty-four years conducted a program of medical surveillance of the people of Rongelap and Utirik atolls who were accidentally exposed to fallout from a weapons test in 1954. Since 1956 this program has been carried out under the direction of Brookhaven National Laboratory (BNL) with the cooperation and participation of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands (TTPI). The purpose of this document is to formulate an agreement between DOE and the TTPI concerning the DOE-BNL Medical Program in the Marshall Islands. This agreement supersedes and extends that of February, 1977 (copy attached). The agreement reached between ERDA and TTPI (December 2, 1974) regarding implementation of the Congress of Micronesia PL-5-52 (Trust Territory Fallout Survivors Act, copy attached) continues in effect. This agreement allows for free hospitalization within the Trust Territory (including travel and per diem allowances) for individuals in the Rongelap or Utirik exposed and control groups who become ill.

The people living on Rongelap and Utirik atolls have recently and separately requested that the DOE Medical Program include more comprehensive care for all the people living on these islands. This resulted in the February 1977 agreement referred to above with provisions for increased medical assistance by DOE to the TTPI in the discharge of health care responsibilities to the people living on Rongelap and Utirik. During the past year, the agreement has been implemented by both parties, apparently to the satisfaction of the Marshallese people involved. That agreement only covered the calendar year 1977; hence, the present agreement is intended to supplant that one.

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The primary responsibility of the DOE medical program in the Marshall Islands concerns the diagnosis and treatment of radiation effects in the exposed Rongelap and Utirik people. In order to carry out this mission satisfactorily a number of unexposed Rongelap people are included in the examinations. Comprehensive annual medical examinations are carried out on these people by the DOE-BNL medical team with the assistance of Trust Territory medical personnel. In addition, a Resident Physician and Physician's Assistant have been placed in the islands and make quarterly trips to Rongelap, Utirik and Bikini for health care purposes. Over and above the primary mission, for humanitarian reasons, the DOE-BNL medical personnel assists the Trust Territory in general health care of other Marshallese whenever possible.

The present agreement concerns 1) the annual medical surveys, 2) follow-up medical care, and 3) health care assistance by DOE-sponsored personnel at Ebeye and Majuro.

1) ERDA will invite TTPI medical personnel (e.g., Medical Officer, nurses, health aides, technicians) to participate in the DOE-BNL medical visits in order to facilitate expanded programs such as Well Baby Clinics, Family Planning, etc., and will assist as feasible, with the logistic support of these activities. The Trust Territory will furnish such personnel referred to above when possible. The DOE-BNL medical team, during the annual surveys, will assist the TTPI in providing medical care to the people living on Rongelap and Utirik. Every effort will be made to extend the duration of the medical teams stay at these islands long enough to examine all people on the islands who wish to be examined in a way similar to that used for the exposed and control groups.

2) Any exposed Marshallese individual who develops an illness that may be related to radiation exposure will be given follow-up medical care, if necessary in U.S. hospitals, under the auspices of DOE. Any Marshallese in the special control group who should develop a similar illness will be treated likewise.

3) The role of the resident DOE-BNL medical personnel at the Ebeye and Majuro hospitals will be to assist the Trust Territory medical personnel in health care of the exposed Rongelap and Utirik people and the people in the control group located at these atolls. As time permits, on a humanitarian basis, the DOE-BNL medical personnel may act as consultants or assist in examination and treatment of other Marshallese as requested by the Director of the Hospital. However, the primary responsibility of all patient care at these hospitals lies with the Trust Territory Health Services.