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March 31, 1949

Dr. Earl I. Morgan  
 Director  
 Health Physics Division  
 Oak Ridge National Laboratory  
 P. O. Box 9  
 Oak Ridge, Tennessee

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Dear Dr. Morgan:

This is to confirm the conversations which you have already had with Col. Cooney. As you are aware, we are faced with a thoroughly serious problem in providing health supervision for personnel who will be engaged in setting up the Sandstone erators. We realize perfectly well that this really should be our own responsibility, but are perfectly frank to admit that at the present time we do not have enough qualified men to spare anyone for this task. Six months from now I believe that the situation will be rather different, but at the present time we are suffering from a certain lack of foresight.

The work in question passes the capabilities of the average worker and calls for someone with a clear understanding of the basic problems and sufficient ingenuity to over come unexpected problems.

At the moment the surfaces of the erators are fairly well established with levels of radiation rather low. The great danger arises with the possibility of disturbing the surface and thereby producing more or less dust which obviously will contain radio active material. A full solution of the problem is obviously a research job in itself involving the careful study of particles sizes. This will not permit this at the present, but the work obviously must be supervised by someone with considerably more than the average amount of experience, someone who will be sufficiently sure of himself to permit work to go ahead if he

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feels it safe, but who also has the courage to insist that work be stopped if he feels that is called for.

It has been estimated that this work at Kaiwotek can commence any time in May, but that it should not be started until adequate health supervision is on the scene. It has further been estimated that completion of the work will probably require up to four months. The supervisor in question would either have to remain during this entire period or until everyone concerned was satisfied that his departure would not leave anyone in danger. It may turn out, of course, that the matter is considerably simpler than we anticipate at the present time.

Col. Cooney tells me that you have a young man named Ray who might be given this assignment. I sincerely hope that this can be done without leaving you too short handed. If Mr. Ray is to take on this work we feel that it would be advisable for him to spend at least a couple of weeks here at Los Alamos going over the problem with those who have been in the area, and to gather together what instruments it may be necessary for him to take.

I will appreciate hearing from you concerning this matter. I will also expect to see you in Oak Ridge 10 days from now.

Very sincerely yours,

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THOMAS L. SHIFFMAN, M. D.  
Health Division Leader

cc:

Dr. Karl Z. Morgan, Oak Ridge  
Dr. Harry O. Whipple  
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