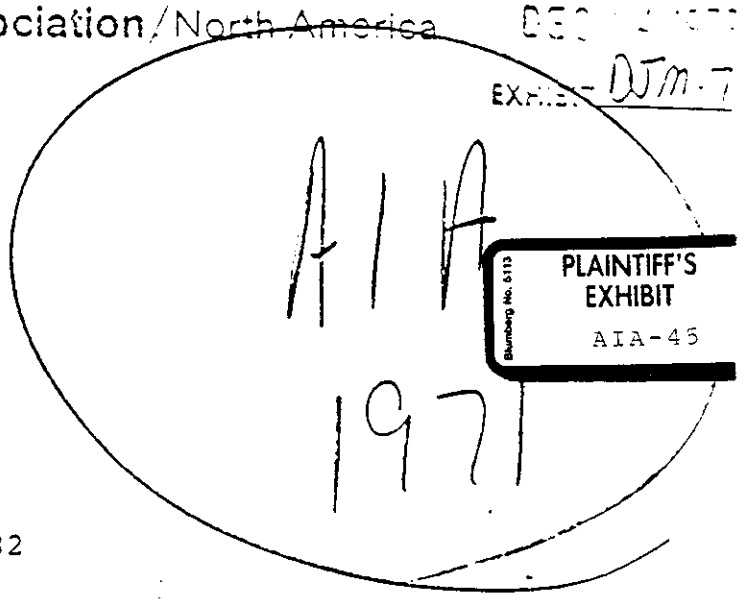
Asbestos Information Association/North America

22 East 40th Street
New York, N. Y. 10016
(212) 661-8206



October 27, 1971

Mr. F. J. Schlink, Editor
CONSUMER BULLETIN
Bowerstown Road
Washington, New Jersey 07882

Dear Mr. Schlink:

Your article on "Hidden Dangers in the Air We Breathe" published in the September issue of CONSUMER BULLETIN may have raised some unnecessary fears among your readership. It should be made clear to your readers that:

Asbestos related health risks are basically occupational in nature.

Asbestos related diseases may develop generally only after inhalation of substantial amounts of asbestos dust for a substantial period of time.

There is presently no evidence of a hazard to the general public from exposure to the minute amounts of asbestos that may be present in community air.

Your article strongly infers that the general public may be subject to the lung disease asbestosis. Asbestosis is purely an occupational disease and occurs only among workers who have had extensive exposure to asbestos over a period of years. We do not know of any cases ever occurring in the general public.

Your article also makes the point that a danger exists for "practically everyone who is forced to exist on the highly contaminated air found in most urban and some rural areas."

There are two major scientific studies of large populations that go counter to this statement. A study of 4,500 men who were employed in a British asbestos factory between 1933-1964 shows that workers who had low and moderate exposure to asbestos dust had a death rate from diseases of the lung, including various forms of cancer, comparable to that of the general public. A similar finding is reported in a recent study of

-More-

Sponsored by Atlas Asbestos Co., Certain-teed Products Corp., Flintkote Co., GAF Corp., Johns-Manville Corp., National Gypsum Co., Panacon Corp., Raybestos-Manhattan, Inc., and Woodwards Corp.

10,421 past and present asbestos production workers in Quebec. In both of these studies it is safe to assume that the low and moderate levels of asbestos dust to which workers were exposed are many times higher than the levels of asbestos found in urban or rural air.

The asbestos industry has had a long-standing concern with the occupational risks associated with asbestos and has spent tens of millions of dollars to install protective equipment in its mines, mills and factories. In addition, the industry has sponsored extensive health research and continues to do so.

We feel that the above facts will help clarify many of the points made in your article.

Sincerely,

William P. Raines
Secretary