16

10/4/82 DRAFT

Honorable Richard Sweicker
Secretary, Department of Health
and Human Services
Washington, D. C.

Dear Secretary Sweicker:

In 1964 Irving Selikoff published a paper titled Asbestosis Among Insulation Workers in the United States, which alerted the asbestos industry and the world to a serious occupational health problem. We shall all remain indebeted to Irving Selikoff and his assistants whose actions resulted in asbestos becoming the most closely regulated of any widely used industrial substance and in the avoidance of additional injury and disability.

I have long believed,based on opinions expressed to me by knowledgable and reputable doctors and scientists, that the Selikoff work was characterized by a lack of academic discipline required in endeavors of this sort. X-rays were overread; disease was diagnosed where none existed; conclusions were overstated and sometimes sensationalized. The 1964 paper and its underlying work have never been subjected to the universally accepted practice of peer review. Yet, practically all inquiry into asbestos related disease since 1964 has built upon or been influenced to some degree by the Selikoff paper. I include the recently completed work of Epidemological Resources, Inc. which was an important factor in my company's decision to file under Chapter 11 of

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WITNESS R.B. Reitze
DATE 2/27/84
JOAN COSGROVE, C.S.R.

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the United States Bankruptcy Code.

We have known that Dr. Selikoff has no formal training in pathology, epidimilogy, radiology or oncology, all fields in which he purports to speak with authority. Regrettably, I must report to you that he appears also to be lacking a basic medical diploma and credentials for the practice of medicine. I enclose the application upon which Irving Selikoff was granted in 1941 a license to practice medicine in New Jersey and in which he claims a degree granted in 1941 by the Royal College of Medicine, Edinburgh, Scotland. I also enclose a letter from the custodian of records of that college stating that after a diligent search, the records of that college do not show any degree awarded to Irving Selikoff in 1941 or in 1940 or in 1942.

No doubt extenuating circumstances exist and will be presented.

That fact is that a whole body of scientific inquiry is now in the shadow of a very dark cloud. What may be false assessments of present disease and exaggerated projections of future disease have been the basis for national policy, regulatory actions and other decisions affecting the lives and livelihoods of hundreds of thousands of people in the United States and around the world.

I respectfully request that you urgently commission a panel of experts to review all of the asbestos related work done by Mount Sinai Environmental Sciences Laboratory under the direction of Irving Selikoff. I have reason to believe that Mount Sinai will now cooperate fully in such an inquiry. The commission should also independently assess the nature and extent of asbestos related disease and disability.

Finally, I would request that you take the lead in marshalling the immense resources of the industrial, medical, labor and governmental complex to resolve the issue of providing compensation to those who have been affected by this tragic legacy of our industrial past. I am confident that quick resolution of this long simmering problem with all responsible parties contributing can be found.

Most sincerely yours,

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