



Department of Energy
Washington, DC 20585

March 23, 2009

Ernest J. Sternglass, PhD
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Director of the Radiation and Public Health Project
4601 Fifth Avenue, #824
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Dear Dr. Sternglass:

Thank you for your letter of February 7, 2009, to the Secretary of Energy, Dr. Steven Chu, regarding your concerns about radiological exposures and public health.

The Department of Energy (DOE) has long shared your concerns regarding the potential effects of radiological exposures upon both workers within DOE and the public residing in communities near DOE sites. Several key structures within DOE and research-partnerships are noteworthy:

- The DOE Office of Science's Office of Biological and Environmental Research conducts and funds research into the effects of low-level ionizing radiation upon both the human organism and also the environment, which seeks to understand the mechanisms of the outcomes to which you have referred and to thereby inform policy regarding DOE and Nuclear Regulatory Commission dose limits for both workers and the public.
- DOE's Office of Illness and Injury Prevention Programs, within the Office of Health, Safety and Security, conducts and funds research into the potential health effects of radiation upon DOE workers, predominantly through a research-partnership with the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, which has contributed to the improved awareness and safety practices of DOE.
- DOE's Office of Illness and Injury Prevention Programs also conducts and funds research into the potential health effects of radiation upon the public, predominantly through a research- and public outreach-partnership with the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry, a partnership which has provided DOE and those respective stakeholders with the independent and, at times, critical research and outreach required to both address the consequences of the Cold War to which you referred and also to prevent future health outcomes associated with radiological exposures.



- DOE retains leading experts, often the same experts in radiation effects and epidemiology, who have served on the National Research Council's committees on the Biological Effects of Ionizing Radiation (BEIR), within research programs or advisory committees in order to foster independence and ensure the credibility of such endeavors; among the primary considerations of the BEIR committees have been radiation effects upon the fetus and heritable genetic effects.
- DOE supports, through grants, the work of the National Council on Radiation Protection and Measurements, which formulates and disseminates information, guidance, and recommendations on radiation protection and measurements with representation of leading scientific experts and activities that can both alert and reassure the population where relevant and reliable data are available.

DOE also has long worked towards the development of energy efficiency and renewable energies. In fact, a number of DOE's existing laboratories were established with just such objectives in mind. However, the Secretary has made clear his commitment to address both the energy crisis and the global climate crisis through expanded efforts in these areas that may well impact the Nation's current utilization of a variety of sources of energy. Indeed, he believes that through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Agenda outlined by President Barack Obama, the Nation will transform the ways in which energy is produced and used.

Again, thank you for sharing your concerns with the Secretary and for your continued efforts to increase awareness of policymakers, scientists, and the public regarding the potential hazards associated with radiological exposures.

Sincerely,



Michael J. Ardaiz, MD, MPH, CPH
Chief Medical Officer
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Office of Health, Safety and Security