

March 25, 1954

RG 128 JCAE

TO: Senator William F. Knowland
 Attention: Mrs. Shaw

FROM: Edward L. Heller

SUBJECT: Tuna Fishing Industry

Location National Archives
 Access No. Box 239
 Folder Reports 1948-55

Dr. John C. Bugher, Director of the Division of Biology and Medicine of the AEC, furnished the following information concerning the affects of the recent Pacific test explosion on the tuna fishing industry:

Briefly, this explosion will have absolutely no affect on the tuna fishing industry from a technical standpoint.

FISHING GROUNDS

Dr. Bugher states that, except for tuna which may be living in the danger area adjacent to the Eniwetok and Bikini Atolls, there will be no affect on tuna in the Pacific Ocean. Even in the danger area, it is extremely doubtful if the fish would be affected enough to present a hazard to health if they were eaten. This conclusion is based on extensive studies of the life and habits of fish in the vicinity of the test islands over the past several years. It is confirmed by the fact that there has been extensive monitoring of fishing boat cargoes arriving in Japan the past two weeks, and with the exception of the fish taken from the Fukuryu Maru, no fish have been found which showed any radioactive contamination. It should be pointed out that the northern Marshall Islands area, near the test islands, is considered poor tuna fishing ground and tuna boats do not normally fish in this area.

TUNA FISH MONITORING

In order to provide positive assurance that no radioactively contaminated tuna fish will get into commercial channels, all Japanese tuna fish shipped to the United States will be monitored for radioactivity by the Food and Drug Administration at West Coast ports and at Honolulu. The AEC is aiding the Food and Drug Administration in setting up this monitoring program. The Japanese government is also undertaking to monitor all tuna fish being canned in Japan for domestic consumption and export. It is Dr. Bugher's considered opinion that this entire monitoring program will fail to turn up a single case of tuna fish with a radioactive count exceeding normal background, let alone dangerous to health. Since the Fukuryu Maru incident a great number of fishing boats coming into Japanese ports have had their fish cargoes monitored for radioactivity, but not a single case of radioactive fish has been found. The Fukuryu Maru cargo is the sole example

of radioactive tuna fish.

Dr. Bugher agrees that the great problem faced by the tuna fishing industry is a psychological one--that is, will people tend to buy less tuna fish for a time as a result of this incident? The Commission lacks the experience necessary to make any comments on this problem. They have, however, been reassuring fishing companies and tuna packers that there is no radiological hazard to the tuna fishing industry in the test explosions currently being conducted at the Pacific Proving Grounds, and providing them with information on the radiological monitoring program being set up by the Food and Drug Administration.

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