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Bldg 4, Rm 203

NBG-266-56
2/20/56

C. L. Dunham, M.D., Director
Division of Biology and Medicine
Atomic Energy Commission
Washington 25, D.C.

Dear Dr. Dunham:

Your letter of February 3, 1956 to Dr. E. O. Lawrence in regard to reporting radiological fallout has been referred to the Health Chemistry group for attention. This group regularly carries out the monitoring program for airborne activity and has reported to you those instances from the past tests in accordance with your requests. We will again be glad to watch our contamination values and report whatever readings may be of interest to you over the period of the coming tests.

Our "clean air" atmosphere sampling procedure is to draw 4 cu. ft. per min. for 24 hours through a filter paper and after holding for 48 hours (to allow decay of the naturally occurring radon and thoron daughters) the paper is counted for beta-gamma. In previous years this residual value was zero and since five times zero gave no basis for reporting, it was arbitrarily decided to make a telephone or telegraph report whenever the remaining long-lived activity on our filter papers reached five times (approx. 125 cpm) the electronic base rate (approx. 25 cpm) of the counting equipment used for this purpose.

For the past several months our samples of "clean air" are quite consistent in showing a residual long lived beta-gamma activity of 20 to 35 cpm, which is presumed to be bomb debris. These readings are confirmed by other agencies nearby making similar determinations. Since this introduces a new factor it may be that you would like to establish a different basis for reporting levels of interest to you; such as the net counts per minute of long-lived activity on our filter papers.

Our sampling will cover the Berkeley and Livermore areas (about 45 miles distant) but it is not likely that figures from rainfall collections will be available since there is seldom any rain in this area in the April-July period.

The person in charge of this program is M. D. Thaxter, U. of C. Radiation Laboratory, Berkeley, Calif, Bus. Phone: Thornwall 3-2740, ext 491, Residence:

Please let us know if you wish to set the approximate levels about which you desire to be informed.

Very sincerely yours,

N. B. Garden
Health Chemistry

NBG:hb

cc: E. O. Lawrence
M. D. Thaxter ✓

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