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COMMISSION

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NOV 6 1954

Honorable Douglas B. Stringfellow
House of Representatives

Dear Mr. Stringfellow:

This is in further reply to your letter of October 7, 1954, in which you discuss the need for reassuring the citizens of Utah that future atomic tests in Nevada will not endanger life, health, and property.

We appreciate the fact that the announcement of a test program next spring in Nevada may cause some apprehension among the sheepmen in southern Utah who normally winter sheep adjacent to the Nevada Proving Ground. As you know, every conceivable precaution is taken to limit the effects of such tests to the confines of the Proving Ground or the area immediately adjacent thereto. All criteria of feasibility for detonating each device will be carefully reviewed by a panel of experts as in the past, and with the improved methods now available for weather forecasting, even more precise predictions are expected to be made.

Provision has also been made to search the areas immediately adjacent to the Proving Ground to locate persons and livestock that may inadvertently have entered areas in which significant fallout from a detonation may occur. Every effort will be made to provide ample opportunity to permit the removal of livestock or persons from such areas, including delaying the test if appropriate. In any event every reasonable effort will be made to insure that precise information will be available on any fallout adjacent to the test site.

The decision to conduct tests and the selection of the particular appropriate test site obviously are matters of vital importance and are made only after thorough study and most careful consideration. Many factors are considered, the most crucial of which is health and safety. If, and only if, the Commission is certain that tests can safely be conducted in Nevada is consideration given to logistic economy and operational convenience.

MEDICINE, HEALTH & SAFETY

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Honorable Douglas R. Stringfellow - 2.

We have determined that the tests planned for Nevada next spring can be executed safely. We cannot, therefore, justify waiving the tremendous monetary savings in logistics and the significant operational flexibility which the Nevada site offers, in order to conduct these particular tests "... at some more remote area outside the continental United States."

We are pleased to note your continuing interest in the research which the Atomic Energy Commission is supporting at the Experimental Station of the Utah Agricultural College. The Commission has a very keen interest in this research, as evidenced by the efforts of the staff of our Division of Biology and Medicine to assist members of the college staff in developing the experimental design of the project finally approved. The project proposal in final form was not received by the Atomic Energy Commission until February, 1954, and the contract became effective April 20, 1954. Hence, it is too early to expect the research to produce definitive findings on the exact cause of the sheep and livestock losses in southern Utah which occurred in the spring of 1952. While the exact cause of animal losses is not known, you will recall that earlier extensive studies made by a committee of government and non-government experts reached the conclusion that radioactive fallout was not the cause. This conclusion was stated in the Commission's report of January 6, 1954, a copy of which was previously furnished to you.

We recognize that there exists some apprehension on the part of many livestockmen in southern Utah that further tests might cause them economic loss. The alternative is not to postpone or relocate the tests, since as outlined above such moves cannot be justified in the national interest, but rather to work closely with the sheep and cattle producers in the area and acquaint them with the facts. This we propose to do. In this respect the assistance of your office would aid immeasurably in avoiding unnecessary abandonment of ranges due to misapprehension and groundless fears, and in furthering the weapons development program of the United States.

Sincerely yours,

cc: Gen. Mgr.
Cong. Comm. (2)
DMA
DIS

K. D. Nichols
General Manager

*Rue for
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