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Deputy for
Pacific Operations

9/5/84

Department of Energy
Nevada Operations Office

Roy Thompson

I'm putting this in the mail today, hoping that it will be on your desk when you return.

I still may do some wordsmithing before the Washington meeting (Sept. 14) and will welcome your critique/comment.

Thanks,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Roy Thompson", with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Roger Ray, NV

(702) 295-3553

FTS 575-3553

September 5, 1984

Draft Letter to the Secretary of the Interior

Dear Mr. Secretary:

This is in response to your request that the Department of Energy update its 1979 evaluation of the habitability of Eneu Island in Bikini Atoll and inform you of what conditions, if any, should be imposed upon a population which may resettle on that island.

Since the writing of the May 15, 1979, letter from Assistant Secretary Clusen, referred to in your letter to me, we have continued our environmental studies at Bikini Atoll and elsewhere in the Marshall Islands. We have a high degree of confidence in the technical data upon which our evaluations are made.

There remain uncertainties, especially regarding human behavior (viz: What is likely to be the composition of the diet of a resettled Eneu population?) and some unknowns, especially as to the response of individuals to given doses of radiation. Customarily, these latter--the unknowns--are dealt with by building conservatism into our radiation protection guidance. The behavioral uncertainties can be treated similarly--that is, by adding yet another degree of conservatism in the application of the guidance, as was done some years ago in setting criteria for the Enewetak cleanup at 50 percent of the annual

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continue for three to six more months but can say now with confidence that the result will not significantly change our overall dose prediction. With our current level of understanding and confidence, the application of the Enewetak 50 percent criterion is no longer justified. The Eneu situation should thus be evaluated against the 500 mrem/yr (5 rem/30 yr) guideline.

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The most recent information regarding dose and risk which has been provided the Bikini people is contained in a bilingual book entitled "The Meaning of Radiation at Bikini Atoll." A copy of that book is enclosed with this letter. On page 21, full-time residence on Eneu is discussed, with two alternative cases: (a) with imported food available, and (b) with only Eneu-grown food available. The expected doses and their predicted consequences are tabulated. The largest predicted one year dose for an individual is 390 mrem in case a; 780 mrem in case b. (It is noted that this dose may not actually be received by any individual. The average dose to the population, and therefore the most likely dose to an individual, would be approximately 1/3 of this largest predicted dose.) The 30 year average dose to this population is predicted to be about 3 rem. These published predictions assumed that residence on Eneu

possibility that Eneu residents may visit Bikini Island and partake of some local foods. We believe that this is a matter for the people themselves, and their leaders, to evaluate. Our obligation, we believe, is to educate and inform the subject population of the risks associated with various radiation doses and of methods of avoiding unnecessary exposures. Although we must acknowledge some evidence, from Enewetak, that our recommendations are not uniformly and rigidly followed, we have convincing long-term evidence from Rongelap that people are following recommendations restricting the use of foods from the northern islands. We do have proven techniques for monitoring

adherence to dietary recommendations. These, usually referred to as bioassay techniques, would be applicable to the Eneu situation, and their continued availability is provided for under the technical assistance provision of the Section 177 Agreement subsidiary to the Compact of Free Association.

To summarize, a population resettled on Eneu at this time would inevitably be subjected to radiation exposures which are higher than those which they now encounter at Kili and Ejit, but with reasonable care their dose commitment would be within the range of that which goes without notice in many other parts of the world and is within U.S. Federal guidelines.

It is assumed that, following resettlement, regular field trip service to Bikini Atoll would be maintained, and therefore that both imported and local foods would be available. Under this assumption, the Department of Energy would recommend the following conditions upon resettlement:

- a. Residence should be restricted to Eneu Island.
- b. Locally grown terrestrial foods should be taken from Eneu Island only.
- c. At least for the first several years a monitoring program should be conducted to evaluate, and report to the appropriate authorities on, the actual radiological aspects of the resettlement.

Should you decide to authorize or facilitate an Eneu resettlement, we will be pleased to assist with detailed planning and implementation.

Sincerely,

Donald Paul Hodel

Enclosure

REPOSITORY PNNL
COLLECTION Marshall Islands
BOX No. 5690
FOLDER Enewetak

DOCUMENT DOES NOT CONTAIN ECI

Reviewed by DJH Date 5/1/97