



Controller of the State of California

SACRAMENTO

January 23, 1961

Dr. and Mrs. Daniel Tolmach

Oxnard, California

Dear Jane and Dan:

Your hospitality as usual was magnificent and I don't know when I have enjoyed a visit more. I am still telling Pat things that happened (the beautiful new club house for the Monday Club, etc!) and she is not happy to have been left at home.

We are expecting you and the family during the session and would be insulted if you did not stay with us. Perhaps with spring coming on Dan will feel it easier to get away. Anyway, it is an educational expense and for the kids. When the Democrats get through with their socialistic medical plan, Dan will be able to vacation anytime he wants to.

I asked Alex Grendon about the atomic waste disposal near Oxnard and he has written the enclosed letter. Alex seems very nice and I feel very competent.

Hope to see you again soon.

Sincerely,

Joseph W. Goss
Administrative Adviser
to the State Controller

JWG:rh
Enc.

State of California

OFFICE OF ATOMIC ENERGY DEVELOPMENT AND RADIATION PROTECTION

GOVERNOR'S OFFICE

SACRAMENTO 14



EDMUND G. BROWN
GOVERNOR

ALEXANDER GRENDON
COORDINATOR

January 17, 1961

Mr. George Grimes, Editor
Oxnard Press-Courier
Oxnard, California

Dear Mr. Grimes:

Mr. Joseph W. Goss, Administrative Adviser to the State Controller, mentioned to me today that there has been some concern shown by the people of Oxnard with regard to what he called the dumping of radioactive wastes offshore. At his suggestion I am writing to explain to you what is in fact going on in that vicinity.

Radioactive wastes of low activity are disposed of in several ways. One way is to mix them with concrete in 55-gallon steel drums or other types of containers and dump these blocks of solid material in deep water. Until a couple of years ago, one of the places that was used for this purpose was the Santa Cruz Basin, some 30 miles off the coast in your vicinity. Because of our concern for the fishing resources of this basin, California asked the Atomic Energy Commission to designate a site farther out at sea for such operations, and waste disposal off Southern California shores has been at a distance of more than 150 miles at sea during the last year or two.

One of the questions that has concerned the Atomic Energy Commission and California agencies is what happens to these containers when they go down to a depth of more than 6,000 feet, as is required by the terms of the AEC license. Some of them have been observed, but very few, because of the difficulty in locating them. To find more information on this subject, the AEC engaged the services of a contractor to conduct some tests of the types of containers used by California firms. Samples of the various types have been selected and taken to the Naval Construction Battalion Center, Port Hueneme, California, as a convenient place from which to move them to the test area.

Since hundreds of containers have already been deposited in Santa Cruz Basin, with no detectable effect on the environment

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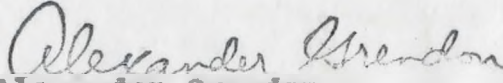
Mr. George Grimes
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and marine life there, it was felt that adding another 150 containers of low-level wastes would make no significant difference. These 150 containers will be immersed to 1,000 fathoms (6,000 feet) and will be photographed before and during the immersion, using special underwater photographic equipment. Containers will be lowered by means of a shipboard winch and cable to this depth, and some of them will be raised again for direct visual observation and comparison with the photographic record.

Additional laboratory high-pressure tests will also be conducted on similar containers and other types that have been used or proposed for use. These tests supplement ocean surveys of the disposal areas that have been conducted in 1957 and 1960 by the Atomic Energy Commission to find out whether any detectable changes in radioactivity of water, bottom sediment, and marine organisms had occurred in the vicinity of these sites. To the extent that the ocean surveys were carried out, the results were negative -- that is, no changes were noted.

There is no significant hazard to be expected from the presence of these few packages of low-level wastes at Port Hueneme or from the tests to be conducted with them. As previously mentioned, they constitute only a small percentage addition to what has been placed in the Santa Cruz Basin, and for that reason, the California Department of Public Health and the Department of Fish and Game have concurred in the use of this site for the present tests. The information expected to be obtained from the tests should be worth a great deal in improving the methods of waste disposal to insure the maximum of safety at all times.

Sincerely


Alexander Grendon
Coordinator

CC: Mr. Paul E. Wolven, City Manager, Oxnard

Mr. Joseph W. Goss, Controller's Office ✓

Department of Public Health, Attn: Dr. John M. Heslep

Department of Fish and Game, Attn: Mr. William E. Ripley

Mr. Robert W. Hughey, USAEC, SPOO