R

(148)

EMA:RON

405-08

APR 23 1954

US DOE ARCHIVES
326 U.S. ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION

RG DOE HISTORIAN (DBM)
Collection 1132
Box 3365
Folder #7

Dear Senator Johnson:

I am pleased to reply to your letter of March 19, 1954, by which you referred a letter dated March 16, 1954 from Mrs. H. C. Burdsal of Ballaire, Texas. Mrs. Burdsal in her letter expresses concern that the public health and welfare may be endangered by the conduct of weapons tests.

The matter of public health and public safety is a prime concern of the Commission in making test detonations. Since its inception, the Commission has conducted within its own laboratories, as well as in the laboratories of universities, colleges, hospitals, and other research institutes, a continuing program of research on the effects of radiation on man, plants, and animals. The Commission is also guided by the advice of the foremost radiologists in this country in determinations of radiation levels which might prove harmful to man, animals, and plants.

Likewise, the possible effects which atomic explosions might have on weather is a question which has been given a great deal of attention by the technical staffs of the U.S. Atomic Energy Commission, U.S. Weather Bureau, and the U.S. Air Force. The most minute and detailed study has failed to show any recognizable alteration in weather patterns in the United States by reason of test detonations. In fact, the weather patterns have compelled delays in executing past schedules and in other respects have modified schedules.

I would wish to assure your constituent that all aspects of the effects of nuclear weapons have been and will continue to be subject to the most serious and informed appraisal by the Commission staff. In this connection, perhaps Mrs. Burdsal would be interested in reading the attached reprint from the Commission's Thirteenth Semiannual Report to Congress. This report discusses results of studies which have been made on the long-term as well as the short-term effects of atomic weapons. If Mrs. Burdsal is interested in a somewhat more technical treatise on this subject, we suggest that she obtain a copy of "The Effects of Atomic Weapons" which can be purchased from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington 25, D.C.

MEDICINE, HEALTH & SAFETY

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

DOE ARCHIVES

There is enclosed also a copy of a statement which I presented at President Eisenhower's press conference on March 31, 1954 upon my return from the Atomic Energy Commission's Pacific Proving Grounds. As you will note, this statement explains that the Atomic Energy Commission has conducted the tests of its larger weapons away from the mainland so that the radioactive fall-out would occur in the ocean, where it would be quickly dissipated both by dilution and by the rapid decay of most of the radioactivity which is of short duration. The statement also is made that there has been a small increase in the natural "background" radiation in some localities within the United States during the current tests, as has been the case after previous United States and Russian nuclear tests. This increase is far below the levels which could be harmful in any way to human beings, animals, or crops.

I sincerely hope that the data presented above will provide you with the information you desire and that it may serve to reassure Mrs. Burdsal that the Commission is taking all possible precautions in connection with weapons tests.

If additional information is required, I shall be happy to furnish it to you. As you have requested, Mrs. Burdsal's letter is being returned to you.

Sincerely yours,

SIGNED AND
DISPATCHED

Lewis L. Strauss
Chairman

Enclosures:
Reprint
Copy of Statement
dated March 31, 1954
Letter dated March 16,
1954 from Mrs. Burdsal
to Senator Johnson

Honorable Lyndon B. Johnson
United States Senate

CC: Chairman
CC: General Manager
2CC: Cong.Comm.Sec.

OGC	DMA	DIS
B Thompson 4/5/54	4-13-54	Aalsburg 4/14

	BM/ADMIN.	BM/X-O	BM/DIRECTOR	CONG.COMM.	GEN.MANAGER	CHAIRMAN
OFFICE ▶						
SURNAME ▶	O'Neill:emr		for			
DATE ▶	4-9-54	4-9	4-9			

Form AEC-318 U. S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE 16—62761-2

DOE ARCHIVES