Department of Energy
Germantown, MD 20874-1290
June 25, 1998

Eugene P. Cronkite, M.D.
Medical Department
Brookhaven National Laboratory
P.O. Box 5000
Upton, New York 11973-5000

Dear Dr. Cronkite:

Thank you for your letter of June 10, 1998, requesting status of any proposed studies of thyroid disease in the population of Ailuk and other atolls.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has completed the "Feasibility of a Study of Thyroid Disease in the Marshall Islands" and presented a briefing to the Republic of the Marshall Islands in May 1997. CDC found that the population, which could be included in such a study, would consist of 8,000 Marshallese who are currently alive and who were children younger than 15 years, or in utero, during the testing period (1946-1958).

CDC has defined objectives, hypotheses, and methods of data gathering that were tested in a small cohort and have been shown to be acceptable for clinical and survey data gathering. Methods for assessing exposure have been carefully considered, required information is available, and the margin of error has been estimated and is deemed by CDC to be acceptable.

CDC plans to provide an update on its activities in the past year at the annual Department of Energy (DOE)/Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI) annual meeting on July 1-2, 1998. The projected cost of the 3-year study is approximately $6 million. CDC's plans to proceed with such a study are pending congressional support and appropriation.

I appreciate your continued interest in our program and your many years of dedicated service in providing health care to the exposed and comparison populations of Rongelap and Utirik.

I always welcome your thoughtful comments. Please feel free to write or call me on (301) 903-5926.

Sincerely,

Paul J. Seligman, M.D., M.P.H.
Deputy Assistant Secretary
for Health Studies

cc: Frank Hawkins, DOE/EH-63
Tom Bell, DOE/EH-63
Mike Montopoli, DOE/EH-61

Printed with soy ink on recycled paper