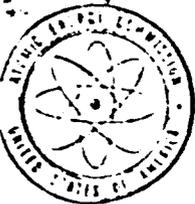


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UNITED STATES
ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20545

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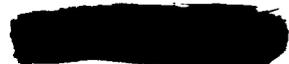
Mr. Stanley Carpenter
Director of Territorial Affairs
Department of the Interior
Washington, D. C. 20240

Dear Mr. Carpenter:

As a result of our visit to Enewetak and Bikini Atolls and the difficulty the Defense Nuclear Agency (DNA) is experiencing in obtaining cleanup funds, we would like to call several items to your attention.

We believe it is essential to verify that the radiation doses to the returning Bikini people do indeed fall within the predictions and that they do not exceed Federal standards. In view of the complexity of the radiation protection measures necessary for safe resettlement of Bikini Atoll, we see a need for our respective offices to maintain a closer working relationship. We urge that future rehabilitation plans such as development of a proposed Bikini master plan be coordinated with us in advance of implementation.

For some time we have been concerned that recommendations on Bikini rehabilitation (that called for construction of the first housing and planting of immediate food crops on Eneu Island) were not strictly followed. Instead houses were built on Bikini Island and there appears to be a prospect of more home construction on Bikini Island. While we do not believe there is an immediate problem with external radiation doses exceeding standards for people living on Bikini Island in the houses already constructed along the lagoon road, there are two other considerations that can have an impact on total dose levels. First, we are unable to predict the full effect of use of significant amounts of locally produced food such as pandanus and breadfruit that will contribute to internal dose. Second, with space on each Wato near the lagoon shore already occupied by existing housing, future construction must necessarily be on land nearer the interior of the island, an area known to have higher external radiation levels than the shore areas. It is conceivable that the combination of living in the island interior and eating foods grown on Bikini Island could result in annual doses higher than predicted by our earlier studies.



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Folder	FACT SHEET - BIKINI RESETTLEMENT

Depending upon the results of our periodic radiation surveys at both Bikini and Enewetak, and the determination of uptake of radioactivity by food crops, there is a possibility that restrictions may have to be placed on the use of foods such as pandanus, breadfruit, papaya and bananas which are now being cultivated on Bikini Island. We recommend that any additional housing be constructed on Eneu, or if this is not feasible, that any further construction on Bikini Island be deferred until the radiological consequences can be evaluated.

On July 12, 1970, in our letter to Mr. Coleman, we recommended that clean coral aggregate from a supply stored on Peter-Oboe be used for house construction on Bikini Atoll. In May 1972, we confirmed that aggregate having low radioactivity levels from Peter-Oboe was being used for houses under construction on Bikini Island at that time. However, during this recent visit, Ted Mitchell said the construction contractor had informed him that aggregate from Bikini Island was being used for house construction. We reaffirm the earlier recommendation that coral aggregate with low radioactivity levels from Peter-Oboe should be used in constructing buildings at Bikini Atoll. Other sources should not be used until they have been checked for radioactivity. Furthermore, if some houses on Bikini Island were indeed constructed with coral aggregate taken from Bikini Island, we should know which houses are involved so that additional radiation monitoring can be done inside these houses. Depending upon the results of these measurements, additional recommendations may be necessary.

We observed that many of the recently planted coconut trees on Bikini Island have shown little growth over this past year, and have turned yellow. I hope that some agricultural specialist can examine the condition of these trees and that steps can be taken to improve the situation.

Finally, the basis for AEC's earlier position on the early return of a group to Japtan, was predicated in a large measure on early commencement of cleanup activities. We assumed that the buildup of facilities and the other associated support would facilitate implementing the more specific considerations contained in Dr. Liverman's letter of July 18, 1974. In view of the current funding

Mr. Stanley Carpenter

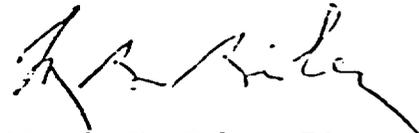
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difficulty, we strongly recommend that you re-evaluate the advisability of an early return to Japtan. Under any circumstances we believe that return of people to Japtan prior to cleanup is an action which can be considered to have a potential for environmental impact and should be discussed in the Environmental Impact Statement.

We will be pleased to assist you in any way we can.

Sincerely,



Martin B. Biles, Director
Division of Operational Safety

cc: W. W. Gay, MA
W. W. Burr, BER
M. Gates, Mgr., NV
Lt. Gen. W. D. Johnson, DNA

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United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20240

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Dear Dr. Biles:

We received your letter dated November 8, 1974, in which you addressed several issues concerning Bikini and Eniwetok.

We, too, feel that our offices should maintain a closer working relationship and agree that rehabilitation plans and master plan development should be coordinated with you in advance of implementation. Frankly, it was surprising that the concern you had on the Bikini construction and rehabilitation was not forcefully voiced to us until this time. Your representatives have many times observed what was being done on Bikini, yet we have no record of communication from the Atomic Energy Commission that the direction of the program was improper.

Upon reviewing the Ad Hoc Committee's report it is clear that Eniwetok was the first choice for habitation but Bikini was not precluded as unsafe. Thus, since the people expressed a strong desire to return to Bikini, that is where the original houses were built. It is our understanding that the AEC was made aware of the people's feelings and, as mentioned, no objection was voiced as AEC witnessed the construction program. We feel that your report entitled "Radiation Safety Considerations at Bikini Atoll," May 1970 (enclosed), serves as a sound justification to support our past efforts. Other than coconut crabs, pandanus was the only food mentioned as needing special attention and the rest of the report was positive from a safety point of view. Dr. Gustafson's 1968 report was also positive.

You also mentioned a rumor that coral other than that from the Peter-Oboe site was used in constructing buildings. Enclosed is a copy of a letter from the general contractor stating that the Peter-Oboe site was the only coral source. You will note that the Bikini District Administrator's Representative attests to the correctness of the statement.

As respects your comment on the slow coconut tree growth, the District Marshalls has told us that the trees are generally doing well in light of the rather limited rainfall. Trust Territory agriculturists are following up with soil checks to ascertain the need for additional nutrients.

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We have given the Japton return issue considerable thought. At this time we plan to proceed with the return, probably about April 1975, after the plan for living, working and support has been fully assessed. We feel an obligation to honor the commitment, especially since the Council passed an ordinance which in part addressed the safety consideration set forth by AEC. The Distad has also assured us that a full-time appointed representative would enforce all restrictions. At present, we are working on an interagency support agreement between the Department of the Interior and the Defense Nuclear Agency concerning the return of 50 people.

In summary, we want to restate our position that AEC must be completely involved in the Bikini project on a rather full-time basis. We suggest an interagency group be set up to participate in all programs related to Bikini. This group should include representatives from DOI, TTPI HQ, TTPI Marshalls, AEC, Holmes and Harver, and NLSO. We will take the lead in setting this up. It may be appropriate to have a meeting in the near future since a master plan is now being prepared by Holmes and Harver.

We also strongly urge that a comprehensive radiological assessment, such as that done on Eniwetok, be undertaken by AEC at the earliest possible time. The DOI/TTPI have an ongoing rehabilitation program that should not be inhibited by lack of complete up-to-date radiological data. The Office of Territorial Affairs stands ready to assist this effort in any way possible, and looks forward to your early response so we may proceed in a cooperative effort.

Sincerely yours, ..

(Sgd) Stanley S. Carpenter

Stanley S. Carpenter
Director of Territorial Affairs

Dr. Martin B. Giles, Director
Division of Operational Safety
Atomic Energy Commission
Washington, D.C. 20545

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Enclosures