



## DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Public Health Service

National Institute for Occupational Safety  
and Health  
715-H, HHH Building  
200 Independence Avenue S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20201  
(202) 401-6997

September 1, 1995

Ms. Mildred McClain  
Co-Chairperson  
Savannah River Site  
Citizens Advisory Board  
720 Maupee Avenue  
Savannah, Georgia 31401

Mr. Bob Slay  
Co-Chairperson  
Savannah River Site  
Citizens Advisory Board  
P.O. Box 192  
Bech Island, South Carolina 29842

Dear Ms. McClain and Mr. Slay:

Thank you for your letter of July 31, 1995. I appreciate your concern for identification of a biological mechanism which may provide a better understanding of potential health effects due to tritium exposure. As you pointed out, a recent study conducted by the Oak Ridge Institute for Science and Education (ORISE) and managed by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) found a positive association between radiation exposure and mortality for leukemia at the Savannah River Site (SRS). NIOSH is presently following up that study with a case-control study relating leukemia to radiation dose at several DOE sites, including SRS. This study will attempt to define relationships between exposure to several different radionuclides (including tritium) and death from leukemia. If NIOSH scientists find a link between tritium exposure and excess leukemia mortality, the DNA study which you propose would have a sound scientific basis.

NIOSH staff presented your recommendation to the HHS Advisory Committee on Energy-Related Epidemiologic Research (ACERER) at their recent meeting, August 23-24, 1995. The committee agreed that a decision should be deferred until the leukemia study is completed.

Page 2 - Ms. Mildred McClain and Mr. Bob Slay

We will keep the Savannah River Site Citizens Advisory Board informed of the progress of the leukemia study. At the conclusion of the study, I propose that NIOSH staff meet with your committee to discuss the results and plan for the next steps in this research area.

Thank you again for your interest in this important research project.

Sincerely yours,



Linda Rosenstock, M.D., M.P.H.  
Director