

DOCKET NO.

27-7

Suppl. Only
File by

July 22, 1958

Mr. Seth Gordon, Director
Department of Fish and Game
722 Capital Avenue
Sacramento 14, California

Dear Seth:

I have been away from my office almost continually since early March and only now have seen your letter of March 20 to the Atomic Energy Commission protesting the contemplated issuance of a permit to Isotopes Specialties Company of Larkspur, California, for ocean disposal of radioactive materials.

While we know little or nothing about this particular project, and have no desire whatever to interfere with the development by the Atomic Energy Commission of the uses of atomic energy, we have been exceedingly worried about what is being done respecting the disposal of atomic waste products in the ocean. Because of the long half-life of many of the waste products, and our lack of knowledge respecting the movement of ocean waters in sub-surface currents, we are not at all certain we are not just as much worried about such dumping at distances far removed from our fishing area and at depths greater than 2,000 fathoms as you are with respect to this particular permit.

Because of this worry, and the uncertainty we have respecting the policies and procedures of the Atomic Energy Commission in these matters, we brought the matter up in the November meeting of the Secretary of the Interior's Advisory Committee on Fish and Wildlife. The Committee adopted a resolution requesting the Secretary to look into the matter and report back, which was done at the June, 1958, meeting. If your people are not acquainted with this report I am sure that Mr. Leffler would be pleased to furnish you with a copy.

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The Committee was not fully satisfied that this subject was being handled by the Atomic Energy Commission in a manner certain not to result in widespread pollution of ocean waters to the detriment of humanity, and has requested further studies to be made.

Your people are also probably aware of the fact that the Committee on Oceanography of the National Research Council of the National Academy of Sciences has been looking into this matter also, not only with a view to the problem itself, but with a view to the size of the ocean research program required to determine the size of the problem connected with the oceanic disposal of atomic wastes. If not, they may wish to communicate with the Committee.

We are most pleased to see you taking such an active interest in this subject and we are hopeful that you will continue to keep us advised of your progress and to depend upon any support we may be able to give your efforts.

Sincerely yours,

W.H. Chapman,
Director of Research

WMC:js

cc: Leffler
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