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April 22, 1981

Messrs. Thomas F. Ahrensfield
Max H. Crohn, Jr.
Joseph H. Greer
Arnold Henson
Ernest Pepples
Arthur J. Stevens

Re: T. D. Sterling and Elia Sterling: An Investigation
of Office Building Syndrome

Gentlemen:

Dr. T. D. Sterling's feasibility study on office environments, which was funded August, 1980, with a total budget of \$13,050, has been completed. This study has led to the development of a proposal to investigate "Office Building Syndrome", a general term given to a collection of non-specific symptoms about which workers in "energy-efficient" office buildings have complained. Dr. Sterling is interested in definitively documenting the existence of Office Building Syndrome, examining possible dependence of this syndrome on building design and ventilation features, and investigating the syndrome's relationship, if any, to life-style factors, -such as smoking.

The study consists of two parts which are to proceed concurrently. The first part would include documentation and review of data accumulated by NIOSH in investigating about 50 office buildings in which occupants had complained of uncomfortable working conditions. (The completed feasibility study related to availability of the NIOSH data and access to NIOSH investigators.) Discussions with NIOSH investigators are planned, with special emphasis on trying to determine the importance (or lack of importance) of life-style factors.

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The second part of the study would consist of a survey of 15,000 members of an office workers' union in New York City. (During the feasibility study, the cooperation of the union was obtained.) The survey will gather data about the workers' perception of uncomfortable conditions in their workplace and their state of well-being; it will also utilize a unique Architectural Stress Information Schedule. This will provide data on the architectural design and ventilation features of the workplaces. Such information will allow analysis with respect to correlations of building design and ventilation with workers' complaints of Office Building Syndrome.

It is our opinion that this study could be useful with respect to the controversial issue of restriction of smoking in the workplace.

It is proposed that Elia Sterling (Dr. Sterling's son) and Dr. Theodor Sterling be co-principal investigators on this project. Elia's CV is enclosed. We have discussed Elia's relationship to Dr. Sterling and have independently concluded that Elia Sterling is qualified to handle this work. He has a Bachelor's degree in architecture from the University of British Columbia and has had experience as an Indoor Air Quality Specialist at the Lawrence Berkeley Laboratory. He is currently Building Ecology Consultant with Cornerstone Planning Group Limited. We have read a report of a project on Office Environment Analysis which Elia Sterling directed for the Cornerstone Planning Group. He will be presenting a paper on this project at the International Symposium on Indoor Air Pollution, Health and Energy Conservation, in October, 1981. A copy of the abstract of his presentation is enclosed. According to Dr. Sterling, Elia Sterling has been largely responsible for the development of this proposed study on Office Building Syndrome. We believe that Elia Sterling is presently engaged in useful architectural analysis work and that it would be advantageous to utilize his experience and abilities. Dr. Sterling, with his many years of research experience, will also be involved in the proposed project and would be fully responsible for the statistical analysis of the data obtained.

Dr. Sterling has been busy lately working on other research projects. At a meeting on occupational health, held earlier this month, he gave a presentation titled "Job Discrimination Based on Exposure Consideration and Smoking." This meeting was monitored by one of our research analysts; she felt that Dr. Sterling's manner of presentation put his potentially hostile audience in a receptive mood and that the audience paid close attention to what Dr. Sterling had to say. He reviewed published evidence contrary to the idea that smoking heightens the risk of disease by interacting with certain substances to which workers

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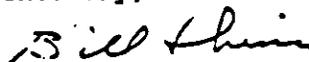
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are occupationally exposed. He also stated that the questions of whether other people's tobacco smoke is hazardous to nonsmoking workers, and whether smoking workers represent an additional cost to industry, are not settled and that the published reports in these areas are based on data which can be questioned on sound scientific grounds.

A Letter to the Editor of the British Medical Journal, from Dr. Sterling, has just been published. It is a brief critique of the Hirayama study of nonsmoking wives of smoking husbands (which concluded that these women had an increased risk of lung cancer compared to nonsmoking wives with nonsmoking husbands). Dr. Sterling suggested other factors which might be important, but which were ignored by Dr. Hirayama. A copy of the letter is enclosed.

We recommend funding of the enclosed proposal as a CTR Special Project. The amount requested is \$128,160 for the first year (see budget), with a proportional amount (plus a 12% inflationary factor) for an additional six months. The total funding requested is \$200,160. An early response would be greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,



William W. Shinn

WWS/dns

Enclosures

cc: Alexander Holtzman
Janet Brown
Edwin J. Jacob

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