

December 1, 1970

Dr. James F. Crow
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Dear Jim,

I am glad to see that you have been named Chairman of an NRC Subcommittee on Radiation Effects.

The one thing that was seriously lacking in previous analyses was an effort at quantitative estimation of the social costs of a given level of mutational increment. When the main policy judgement in the balance was atmospheric testing of strategic nuclear weapons this may not have seemed so urgent. But in the present context where primarily economic factors are involved in the regulation of radioactive emissions I think we must come more closely to grips with this question.

I think you will recognize the arguments that I have summarized in the attached letter and I am sure you could both criticise and improve upon them. My plea is that your subcommittee address the same question whether or not you come out with anything like the same answer in terms of dollars per man-rad.

You may be interested that Bo Lindell has reached some strikingly similar conclusions about the evaluation of radiation costs through a different line of argument.

Sincerely yours,

Joshua Lederberg
Professor of Genetics

Enclosure
JL/rr

*Dr. Crow
lts on radiation*