

STANFORD UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

STANFORD MEDICAL CENTER
PALO ALTO, CALIFORNIA 94304

DEPARTMENT OF GENETICS

Area Code 415
321-1200

February 2, 1969

Dear Senator Nelson:

I was pleased to read of your bill to establish a Public Health Hazards Commission. The concerns it speaks to have been shared by me for many years, as you may note from the enclosures. I do not wish to drown your record with redundant paper, but please feel free to use any or all of these as statements on behalf of your proposal.

What still puzzles me is a political question. Why should we have to have a commission when there are already government agencies, e.g., in the Public Health Service, competent to sponsor the same kinds of enquiry. (If there is a legal impediment, which I doubt is the answer), it should of course be erased.) Why don't they do the job?

I have mixed feelings about the DDT hearings in Wisconsin, possibly because of incomplete information. It is of course obvious that we need (for a change) a vigorous reaction to the mindless spreading of the stuff all over the landscape, and I suspect that 90% of the DDT-load is based on misdirected applications or ~~thats~~ if not, on uses for which substitutes are available. On the other hand, it may be optimistic to accept that the latter is always the case, and for this reason I would feel easier if DDT usage were licensed and regulated rather than abolished. Some of the ecological concerns rightly aroused by the indiscriminate use of DDT would surely be met by regulation. My real concern is not to protect the agricultural uses of DDT in this country, but its role in public health programs throughout the world. Do WHO experts agree that effective substitutes for DDT are available (where the overuse of DDT generally has not already selected for genetically resistant insects)? If DDT is totally condemned here, we may face a situation like the hangup on fish-flour: "imperialist Americans (via WHO) "will be accused of "poisoning oppressed peoples by using DDT in mosquito control programs." If the advantages of DDT are purely economic, will you help assure that we increase our support of WHO to make up the cost difference?

However, I do not have all the technical reports available to me (and would appreciate whatever your staff could help me get out of the hearings.) Furthermore, I can also understand the possibility that a demand for proscription may be the only way to extract regulation of a hard-sold commodity.

Sincerely,

LT. J. P. KENNEDY, JR. LABORATORIES FOR MOLECULAR MEDICINE, DEDICATED TO RESEARCH IN MENTAL RETARDATION

MOLECULAR BIOLOGY

HEREDITY

NEUROBIOLOGY

DEVELOPMENTAL MEDICINE

John F. Kennedy

NELSON, Senator

ENC: - 195
ACZ: John