



Protecting, maintaining and improving the health of all Minnesotans

July 27, 2001

Roger R. Conant, MGA, Ph.D., CLU
Power Line Task Force
2 Sunfish Lane
Sunfish Lake, Minnesota 55118

Dear Dr. Conant:

I am writing in response to your letters of June 6, July 5, and July 20. I also want to thank you for meeting with me and other Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) staff on June 5, 2001. I enjoyed meeting with you and having an opportunity to discuss your concerns regarding electric and magnetic fields (EMF). I regret that you feel your meeting with us was hostile. This was not my intention, and I sincerely appreciate the time that it took for you to prepare your presentation and the materials for our meeting.

After careful deliberation, I have concluded that a revision of MDH's January 2000 EMF Assessment is unwarranted at this time. MDH technical staff have reviewed the current scientific literature and concluded that the vast body of EMF research to date provides limited support to demonstrate that EMF causes leukemia or any other adverse health effect. This conclusion is based on:

- (1) the failure of laboratory studies to support an etiologic role of magnetic fields and leukemia (even at high exposure levels);
- (2) the lack of an understood biological mechanism for how magnetic fields may initiate or promote the growth of cancer; and
- (3) the limitations of epidemiological studies, which have reported mixed and weak associations.

While the possibility of some risk cannot be entirely dismissed, the current weight of evidence does not support a cause and effect relationship between EMF and cancer (or any other adverse health effects).

MDH staff continue to speak regularly with leading EMF scientists around the country, including researchers affiliated with the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS) EMF RAPID Program, the National Toxicology Program, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, state health departments, and academic institutions. Staff also attended the June 2001 Bioelectromagnetics Society Annual Meeting, which included over 200 scientific presentations and posters, and an opportunity to discuss the current EMF research with leading national and international EMF scientists.

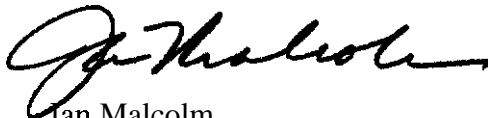
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In response to your characterization of our position as “out of step” with leading authorities, I have concluded that MDH’s position, as stated in the January 2000 EMF Assessment, remains consistent with that of the NIEHS and with the views of many (if not most) leading researchers in the scientific community.

MDH is familiar with the draft report which was recently released by the California EMF Program. At this time, this document should be considered preliminary until comments have been received and a final report is published. MDH does not expect to comment until the report is final. We certainly will continue to track the developments in California, as well as other states.

In conclusion, I will reiterate our previous statement that we consider it prudent public health policy to continue to monitor the EMF research and to support prudent avoidance measures. What avoidance measures should be considered “prudent” in response to limited and inconclusive evidence of a health risk is clearly a public policy decision.

Sincerely,



Jan Malcolm
Commissioner
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cc: Michael Michaud, Department of Commerce
John Hynes, Environmental Quality Board
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Janet Gonzales, Public Utilities Commission
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Frank Tiffany, Mayor of Sunfish Lake
Charles Mertensotto, Mayor of Mendota Heights
Kathleen Gaylord, Mayor of South St. Paul
Heidi Benedict, Xcel Energy