Avaltroni, Robert
From: Ryan, Geoff
Sent: Tuesday, February 05, 2002 12:32 PM
To: Sturcken, Charles; Avaltroni, Robert
Subject: FW: DRAFT Press Release

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From: Andrew Tucker
Sent: Tuesday, February 5, 2002 12:21 PM
To: geoffr@dep.nyc.gov
Cc: Greg Butler; Sandra Mullin
Subject: DRAFT Press Release

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For your review...

I know that I need not remind you of this, but in case this email is forwarded to anyone else, the attached document is a draft and is not intended for external distribution.

If and when another draft becomes available, I will email you. Give me a call at 295-5335 if you have any questions. Thanks.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE CONTACT: Sandra Mullin/Greg Butler
Tuesday, February 5, 2002
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NYC DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH PRESENTS FINDINGS FROM INDOOR AIR SAMPLING TO RESIDENTS OF BUILDINGS IN LOWER MANHATTAN

Analysis of Air Samples Taken from Residential Buildings in Lower Manhattan Indicates No Elevation of Asbestos in Air; Low Levels of Asbestos Found in Surface Samples from Some Buildings; As Expected, Fiberglass Also Detected in Dust

As part of an ongoing effort to assess the environmental impact of the World Trade Center (WTC) disaster and to respond to public health concerns, the New York City Department of Health (DOH) requested assistance from the federal Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) to conduct air tests inside and in the immediate grounds outside thirty residential buildings in lower Manhattan. Asbestos is a health hazard when it is airborne; in no instance was an elevated level of asbestos found in the air samples taken from these buildings.

In addition to the indoor and outdoor air testing, dust samples were also taken from inside apartments, common areas (e.g., hallway, lobby), and outdoor areas of the buildings. Test results from some of the

buildings showed low levels of asbestos on the floor of the lobby and on the ground outside. Results from the testing for other materials are not yet complete but preliminary results indicate that fibrous glass (fiberglass) was also present in settled dust samples.

Letters are being sent to building owners and residents informing them of these findings and reminding them of DOH's cleaning recommendations. Because work continues at the WTC site, residents and building owners in the area are advised to continue to follow cleanup instructions. These include using a wet mop, damp cloth or a high efficiency particulate air filter (HEPA) vacuum to clean dust from hard surfaces. HEPA vacuums should be used to clean carpets, upholstery, and other materials that cannot be cleaned by wet wiping. To prevent the recirculation of dust, residents were again advised not to sweep with "dry" brooms, use dusters, or use vacuums without an approved HEPA filter. Additionally, since work continues at the World Trade Center site, all residents were advised to avoid carrying dust into their buildings from outdoors (e.g., by taking off shoes, etc).

New York City Health Commissioner Thomas R. Frieden, MD, MPH said, "Since the collapse of the World Trade Center, an event that resulted in the release of large amounts of dust and airborne substances, some residents of lower Manhattan have experienced short-term health problems such as cough, irritation of the eyes, nose, and throat. The data from air quality tests thus far have been reassuring. All of the testing done to date has not shown results that would indicate long-term health impacts. However, conclusive scientific knowledge about the

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potential health hazards of some substances is not available. It is not possible to know with certainty whether there will be long-term health consequences."

"DOH recognizes residents' concerns and will continue to work closely with local, State and Federal agencies to monitor air quality and to inform the public of findings as soon as results are available. Additionally, DOH has been working with the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to develop a protocol for a World Trade Center Registry, which would generate and maintain a database that can provide a more complete picture of short- and long-term health and mental health impacts among the affected populations," Dr. Frieden concluded.

The Sampling Plan

At the request of DOH, ATSDR conducted indoor air tests in 59 apartments in 30 geographically representative buildings in lower Manhattan in November and December 2001. Testing was also conducted in four buildings above 59th Street not impacted by migrating dusts from the World Trade Center site to provide information on the background

level of various substances present indoors in New York City. Using widely accepted testing methods, the agency looked for several materials
that could potentially cause short and long-term health problems. Each set of tests included samples for air and for settled dust, and these samples were analyzed for fiber-like materials - asbestos, fibrous glass
- and for other particles including silica, gypsum, mica, and calcite.

A comprehensive report on this testing will be available this spring. However, if results of public health significance are found, they will be released to the public as soon as they become available. Results of outdoor sampling since September 11 for air, water, and dust - including
asbestos and particulate matter - are posted on the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's website, epa.gov, and can also be found on the New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) website at nyc.gov/dep. WTC-related information can also be found at the New York City Department of Health's Web site at nyc.gov/health.

Health Information about Asbestos and Fiberglass
Exposure to asbestos is associated with asbestosis (scarring of the lungs) and cancer. The risk of developing these diseases depends on the level (dose) and the length of time exposed (duration). The likelihood of developing disease from limited, short-term, low-level exposure is low. There is no test that can indicate whether an individual has been exposed to asbestos. In the occupational setting, where the duration and
intensity of asbestos exposure can be greater, there is a higher risk to
workers. Workers need to use the correct protective equipment to reduce exposure.

Exposure to some forms of fiberglass can cause cough, eye, nose, skin, and throat irritation. Long-term health effects associated with fibrous
glass are not known and standards for measurement of fibrous glass in environmental samples are not well established. Although fiberglass is classified as a possible carcinogen, recent studies of more than 30,000 industrial workers who worked with fiberglass found no conclusive evidence of an increased risk of cancer.

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