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UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460

MAR - 6 2002

Thomas R. Frieden, M.D., M.P.H.
Commissioner
New York City Department of Health
125 Worth Street
New York, NY 10013

OFFICE OF
SOLID WASTE AND EMERGENCY RESPONSE

Dear Dr. Frieden:

Thank you for your letter of February 14, 2002, to Governor Whitman, Administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA or Agency) regarding Ms. Cate Jenkins, to which the Governor has asked me to reply. You asked for clarification of the Agency's position with respect to asbestos, following your receipt of a letter from Ms. Jenkins, an Agency employee, which offered her opinion with respect to the sampling and analysis taking place in and around the World Trade Center site.

Your department and any other person or organization should consider Ms. Jenkins' views on this matter as those of any private citizen, and not those of an official Agency representative. As she stated in her letter, her opinions are her own and do not reflect the official scientific or policy views of the EPA. Under her official duties, she holds no responsibilities related to the response work being carried out at the site. She does not represent EPA's position on asbestos analytic methods, risk assessment approaches, or response methods. For the record, EPA disagrees with the asbestos risk assessment approach this employee proposed, and believes it does not reflect the scientific consensus on characterizing the health effects of asbestos.

I appreciate your kind words regarding EPA's support to New York City. EPA has been coordinating closely with New York City, New York State, and other Federal agencies to ensure consistent use of the latest proven state-of-the-art analytical methods, to evaluate data from multiple agencies on a daily basis, and to protect potentially exposed individuals. I agree that we have had a successful, collaborative approach among the various Federal, state and local agencies involved. This has been a difficult situation for all concerned, and I apologize for the confusion caused by this employee's letter.

I hope this clarifies the Agency's position. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Marianne Lamont Horinko", is written over a horizontal line.

Marianne Lamont Horinko
Assistant Administrator