

June 27, 1973

Dr. Maxine Singer  
National Institutes of Health  
Room 9N-119, Building 10  
Bethesda, Maryland 20014

Dear Maxine,

I understand the Gordon Conference on Nucleic Acids was a great success and I'm sure your input and direction helped make it so. John Morrow enjoyed the Conference, learned a great deal and was deeply grateful for the financial assistance that made his attendance possible.

John told me of the discussion concerning "potential hazards" and I read your remarks to the Conference on that score. As you must know, I have some interest in the same subject. I read your letter to Phil Handler and have taken the liberty of sending you some of my comments.

I think a study committee of the type suggested would be worthwhile and could clear the air. The only feature of your letter to which I take exception is the "feel" being transmitted that this kind of work may very well be hazardous rather than what I prefer to think is we have no way of knowing whether it is or not. The phrase in the first paragraph, "certain of these hybrid molecules are potentially hazardous" seems a bit strong although, admittedly, the word potentially is intended to convey doubt; but the doubt seems borderline. May I offer a substitute for the first two sentences of the second paragraph for your consideration?

(We are concerned at the possibility that such hybrid molecules could be hazardous to laboratory workers and the public. Though no indications of such a hazard presently exist, a majority of those attending the Conference voted to communicate their concern to you and to the President of the National Academy of Medicine (to whom this letter is also being sent). . . .

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I hope all is well with you, Dan and the kids. Sometime soon I hope to hear about your year in Israel and your baptism in the tumor virus field. Whatever happened to that paper you were writing on the defectives? Is there a chance of getting a copy?

With best regards,  
Sincerely,

PB:af