

June 6, 1977

Lorill Brown-Rezanka
Legislative Aide
State Capitol
Room 5031
Sacramento, California 95814

Dear Ms. Rezanka:

I am sorry that my schedule resulted in a delay in my response to you. Enclosed is a copy of the testimony I prepared for presentation before the California Assembly Committees on Health and Resources, Land Use and Energy last January. I'm sure you realize that the actual testimony, as shown in the transcript, differed from the prepared testimony because of exchanges with the Assembly members.

Perhaps the most pertinent additional information I can offer is to bring you up to date on activities in the Congress. After several hearings, multiple bills and draft bills, new versions have been offered both in the House (HR7418) and Senate (S1217). The two bills are not identical and at present it is difficult to predict how similar they will be prior to their being reported out of Committees and voted on. It is apparent that a real sense of urgency exists in the Congress concerning the need promptly to enact legislation that will control recombinant DNA research in both the private and public sector. Both bills provide for licensing procedures for carrying out experiments, inspection of laboratories, regulations governing procedures, and civil and criminal penalties.

Given the nature of the speculative hazards of recombinant DNA research and particularly the fact that escaped organisms will not honor geographic boundaries, it is clear that only nation-wide safety measures can provide the confidence that experiments will be conducted with minimal or negligible risk for all. Therefore, it is my belief that interested members of the California legislature might want to inform themselves concerning Congressional efforts and to offer the Congress their advice on these matters. In my view the whole country will be well-served by such participation. It is, I believe, less

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useful to press for State or local action on this matter, for the reasons stated above as well as the fact that multiple regulatory mechanisms will be both costly and confusing.

Should you wish to have additional information please get in touch with me again.

Sincerely yours,

Maxine Singer, Ph.D.
Head, Nucleic Acid Enzymology Section
Laboratory of Biochemistry

Enclosure