

At 9:00 AM 15 4-5-74

DEPARTMENT OF BIOCHEMISTRY
UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER

FROM
PROFESSOR H. L. KORNBERG F.R.S.

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11th June, 1974.

Professor Paul Berg,
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STANFORD, California 94305,
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My dear Paul,

I would be most grateful to have your help (rather urgently) in a matter in which, I believe, you are now taking a leading part. Some months ago I read the letter from Maxine Singer and Dieter Söll, which was published in Science of 21st September, 1973 and which drew the attention of the readers to the possible dangers inherent in the construction of hybrid molecules. Indeed, I was so impressed that I brought this letter to the attention of a couple of Committees that are supposed to keep an eye on potential health hazards; unfortunately, my warnings have been regarded as scare mongering (at worst) or tending to inhibit research (at best). However, rather grudgingly, I have been invited to address a Government Committee (on Laboratory Use of Dangerous Pathogens) and hope that I may be successful in at least getting them not to dismiss the whole problem out of hand.

I understand from Maxine that the National Academy has set up a Study Committee on this subject and that you are its Chairman. Since my Committee here meets at the end of this month, and (as you will hardly need me to point out) I am by no means expert in this area, I would be much obliged if you could tell me something of your Group's thinking, and particularly give me any material which is relevant to the consideration of possible health hazards. Is any action envisaged?

Any information that you could let me have would be much appreciated.

With warmest regards,

As ever,

Hans