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COPY

April 11, 1975

Mr. Donald F.B. Jameson
Tetra Tech, Inc.
1911 Fort Myer Drive, Suite 601
Arlington, Virginia 22209

Dear Mr. Jameson,

I have your letter of April 7th concerning the position of the Natural Resources Defense Council of which I am a trustee. As I find myself in a rather uncomfortable, but I hope tenable, middle position in this controversy, my posture can not be summarized as yes or no, and I might have to take some time to explain it in detail. Let me say, however, that I signed the Bethe Statement taking the text as a whole; and I regret that public notice has been given almost exclusively to the one sentence that refers to the unavoidable expansion of nuclear energy. I believe that nuclear energy technology still faces formidable problems of safety assurance before it can be given an unqualified go-ahead; but I am eager to see that it has every opportunity to reach that state! For example, the expected time between failure (to melt down) as analyzed by the Rasmussen Report, seems to me to be too short by approximately an order of magnitude to offer an acceptable level of risk. I am given no reason to believe that this improvement is unachievable but I do not have estimates of its possible cost.

As to the NRDC, I am an enthusiastic supporter of its program of litigation and judicial testing of public controversies in the area of environmental hazard. I see this as the most orderly and effective procedure available to us for resolving these conflicts of interest and in that light I would hope that you would in fact consider responding affirmatively to its request for financial support, even though you may not agree with the actual position taken by NRDC as a legal protagonist. These controversies are an objective reality and what NRDC does provide is perhaps the best available procedure for dealing with them. Surely these cases are a preferred alternative to the decision making procedure that is advocated in the referendum constitutional amendment that is being presented to California voters at the present time.

I would agree with you, however, that some aspects of the public relations of NRDC are stepping out of line, and I have not been enthusiastic about the kind of mailing to which you now object. However,

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just as there are some statements in the Bethe Report, which I would have preferred to have been presented in a somewhat different tone without being deterred from subscribing to the entire statement, I still believe that the program of NRDC, taken as a whole, is one of the most constructive forces for progressive change that can be found in this country today.

However, I will use the occasion of this letter, by copy to my fellow trustees, again to indicate my feelings about the style of these mailings. If NRDC could find itself readier methods of achieving public notice and especially public financial support, perhaps there would be less motive to use this particular approach.

Sincerely yours,

Joshua Lederberg
Professor of Genetics

JL/rr

cc: Mr. John Adams, NRDC