

March 28, 1962

Robert J, Anderson, M.D,
Assistant Surgeon General
Deputy Chief
Bureau of State Services
Department of Health, Education, and Welfare
Washington 25, D. C.

Dear Dr, Anderson:

We very much appreciate your thoughtfulness in sending us a copy of the "Report of the Committee on Environmental Health Problems." We feel fortunate to have received a copy at such an early date.

We are all agreed that the Report is thoughtful, comprehensive, and outstanding in nearly every respect. However, we feel that the Committee failed to give any semblance of proper recognition to the modern professional public health sanitarian. The only reference I find to the professional sanitarian mentions that he "will be required at the field level to conduct studies and demonstration projects and perform surveillance operations." This, obviously, completely fails to properly describe the functions and duties of the modern professional sanitarian and seems to be built around the concept of the "sanitary inspector." It is well known that public health sanitarians have the prerequisite educational background to appropriately participate in practically all aspects of a comprehensive environmental health program at the Federal, State and local level. The professional sanitarian has a background and scientific training of greater breadth than most other environmental specialists. In addition to having the necessary and desirable training in the physical and social sciences, his graduate work in public health prepares him for a wide variety of programs at any level of government or industry. This is attested to by hundreds of competent, progressive public health sanitarians engaged in environmental health supervision, administration, research, education, and public relations, as well as "demonstration projects and surveillance operations" throughout the world. It is undoubtedly true that appropriate professional recognition and knowledge of the functions and abilities of the modern professional sanitarian has come exceedingly slow,

partially due to the lack of knowledge by other public health professionals, but also in no small way to the variation and lack of cohesiveness in the sanitarian group itself.

Professional sanitarians are competently administering and supervising a wide variety of environmental health programs throughout the country at all levels of government and industry. A great many of the most outstanding environmental health programs in the nation are presently being administered by professional sanitarians. Within the past few years their competencies have been demonstrated, recognized, and demanded to the point that the Public Health Service is no longer competitive for such personnel. It is past time that sanitarians be removed from the Public Health Service "restricted category."

The Gross Report consistently appears to ignore public health sanitarians or perhaps considers them vaguely in the general engineering category. Several years ago the sanitarian group was set up as a separate category in the U. S. Public Health Service, and while there are still many individuals other than public health sanitarians in the sanitarian category, the group should receive appropriate professional recognition commensurate with their training, functions, usefulness, and future activities in such a report as the one under discussion. It is regrettable that professional sanitarians were not represented on the Committee in keeping with their contributions to, and competencies in, the broad field of environmental health.

Again my appreciation for the opportunity to comment on the Report. I am sure you will accept these comments in the spirit in which they are intended or I would not have bothered you with them,

Very sincerely,

Larry J. Gordon Director
Albuquerque Health Dept.