

STATE OF NEW YORK
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SERVICE

Interoffice Memorandum

September 25, 1986

TO: BOB SIMPSON, DAVE STRICOS, FRED CARR, JIM DE WAAL MALEFYT
FROM: DAN DRISCOLL
SUBJECT: International Utility Symposium – Health Effects of Electric
and Magnetic Fields: Research, Communication, Regulation;
September 16–19, 1986 in Toronto, Canada

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The Symposium was excellent. I can't begin to summarize the Symposium in this memo, but I will try to give some guidance to help you choose which papers to read (or tapes to audition). I have copies of all of the papers, and professionally made tapes of some of the better talks and discussions.

The keynote address by Dr. Bates, "The Basis for an Environmental Strategy: Corporate Responsibility and Public Risk," was an outsider's view of the directions for future research and research funding—very perceptive. He noted that the utilities had the primary responsibility to fund research to answer the health hazard questions.

Dr. Savitz's paper, "Human Health Studies on Exposure to Fields," was a good overview of epidemiological research.

It was good to see Andy Marino again; his presentation, "Health Risks from Electric Power Facilities," was well done but depended heavily on slides. The exchange between Andy and H. B. Graves during the Q&A period and panel discussion was good. I have three tapes containing the entire exchange. At one point the panelists were asked what the likelihood was that fields from electric power facilities pose a hazard to human health. Phillips and Shepherd both felt that the probability was high but that it will be very difficult to prove because the

chance of a hazardous effect occurring is very small.

In response to the panel and other discussions, a speaker on the last day (a former journalist, Kennedy Maize) commented that the theme of the symposium might be “Maybe Andy Marino had it right all along.”

After my talk, Asher Sheppard remarked that New York’s Power Lines Project has had the most bang-for-the-buck of any research program in this area, and that it has had a remarkable impact on the community. He noted that the prospect for federal funding of type of research looks bleak, that EPRI “has its limitations,” and he expressed concern about where funding would come from for continuation of the New York studies. I have a tape of my talk and Jameson's talk (which followed mine) about the rationale for Montana’s 1 kV/m limit.

The outstanding talk of the symposium (if you are interested in the topic) was James Creighton’s “Public Involvement in Utility Decisions,” in which he explained the how’s and why’s of public involvement. In the future, he explained, “utilities which choose a confrontational approach to the public will be considered the dinosaurs of the industry, taking unnecessary risks with their resources.” (emphasis added) I have a tape of Creighton’s talk and Granger Morgan’s (a risk assessment specialist) which followed.

The entire session on legal lessons was good, with speakers from all of the hot spots: Texas, Minnesota, California and Florida. “The Florida Experience” by Carlos Alvarez was particularly good; his oral and written presentations are somewhat different. I have a tape with “The Florida Experience,” “Lessons from California,” and the panel discussion (moderated by Henry Nowak of Niagara Mohawk) which followed.

DAD: llr

cc: John O’Grady

Dr. David O. Carpenter