

Outline for  
REMARKS TO CMA BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
January 23, 1984

by Harry A. Eschenbach, Chairman  
Occupational Safety and Health Committee

OBJECTIVES

- o Provide the best possible protection from accidents and health hazards for chemical workers.
- o Have government set up a panel of eminent scientists from several disciplines to determine causation of occupational diseases.
- o Influence OSHA to publish performance standards where necessary, that permit employers latitude in meeting stated goals.
- o Avoid or soften state and local right to know laws.
- o Improve the chemical industry's image, particularly regarding workplace health and safety.

KEY ISSUES

- o Our detractors say we do not adequately protect chemical employees. They insist strict regulations severely enforced are needed.
- o Causal relationships between workplace exposure and disease are rarely clear cut. Now, they are arrived at in a highly political atmosphere.
- o In previous administrations, OSHA regulations were specification oriented and favored engineering controls. We need to convince the interested parties that a balanced approach is needed.
- o Unions and activists claim the chemical industry is withholding toxicological information about its processes and materials handled. Since access to this data is not assured through federal regulation, they are obtaining it through state and local right to know laws.
- o While our industry has an outstanding safety record, the public perception is that we do not do enough to safeguard workers or those who live near chemical plants.

MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- o In the last few years, the chemical industry has climbed from sixth place to top position in the National Safety Council summaries of industrial safety.
- o A CMA spokesman recently recommended in testimony before the House Subcommittee on Labor Standards that a science panel to determine occupational causation of illness should be established.

MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS (contd)

- o A federal hazard communication rule has been prepared by OSHA, and after suitable clearance will hopefully be published this fall. In addition, we have completed a study of the cost to government as well as to industry of two typical right to know laws.

SIGNIFICANT PROGRAMS

- o A community activities work group is organizing support from fire chiefs and others sympathetic to our position on right to know issues. That work group also plans to assist communities set up programs to deal with chemical emergencies.
- o In comments to OSHA on proposed standards we stress the need for performance language. Standards they have published recently, like Marine Terminals, indicate they have heard our suggestions.
- o We continue to sponsor a safety award program for members as an added incentive to continually improve performance. The OSH Committee is in the process of modifying the rules and procedures for the Lammott Du Pont Award to make participation more attractive to members.
- o OSHC created a task group on Education and Communication to help get the message to Congress and the public about our industry's activities and fine record in safety and health.
- o CMA promotes the separation of science from politics in the regulatory process. For example, we expect to support, in principle, the Martin Bill which would establish a board for scientific risk assessment to deal with chronic health hazards in the workplace and elsewhere.

CMA  
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