Department of Energy
Germantown, MD 20874-1290

August 25, 1998

The Honorable Phillip Muller
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Republic of the Marshall Islands
Majuro, Marshall Islands 96960

Dear Minister Muller:

This letter updates the Department of Energy's (DOE) ongoing program to declassify and make available documents relating to the health and environmental effects on the Marshallese people and atolls as a result of U.S. nuclear weapons testing. In 1993, DOE began extensive searches in our archival record holdings and that of our predecessor agency, the Atomic Energy Commission, for the purpose of openly disclosing this important information to the people of the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI). DOE has searched those record collections most likely to produce documents of interest to the RMI. These searches have identified and made available to the RMI and the general public a comprehensive volume of weapons testing-related information consisting of some 165,000 declassified and unclassified hard-copy document pages.

Of primary focus during the Department's records searches over these past 5 years were the documents requested in the February 14, 1994, letter from Thomas D. Kijiner, Minister of Foreign Affairs to the Department (enclosed). There remain four record collections whose examination in fiscal year 1999 will complete DOE's response to the Minister's letter: (1) BER Radiation Exposure Collection Number 326-78-3; (2) the 1974-1975 Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) Secretary's Files, Collection Number 9; (3) the 1961-1975 (AEC) Minutes, Collection Number 10; and (4) the classified sections of the Tommy McCraw Collection Number 1324. DOE looks forward to completing that effort and forwarding the promised information to the RMI in 1999.

DOE is committed to continued full and open disclosure of records concerning nuclear weapons testing in the Marshall Islands. That is why the Department has undertaken an aggressive program to make available on DOE's International Health Program web site over 1,000,000 document pages by January 1999. This electronic medium permits direct access by the RMI and the public to this important information. Similarly, DOE provides public access to over 300,000 atmospheric nuclear weapons testing-related documents through the Center for Information and Coordination (CIC) in Las Vegas, Nevada.

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Once the Department has examined the four records collections mentioned earlier, we believe that future searches should be based on a prioritized list jointly developed by DOE and the RMI. As we agreed at the annual meeting in Honolulu this past July, I look forward to receiving your proposed list of search priorities so that we may continue this important work together.

Sincerely,

Andy Lawrence

for Paul J. Seligman, M.D., M.P.H.
Deputy Assistant Secretary
for Health Studies

Enclosure

cc w/enclosure:
The Honorable Banny de Brum,
Ambassador of RMI
The Honorable Joan Plaisted,
U.S. Ambassador
Emil Skowden, DOS
Nancy L.B. Fanning, DOI

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
REPUBLIC OF THE MARSHALL ISLANDS
MAJURO, MARSHALL ISLANDS 96960

February 14, 1994

Encl 1

Dr. Harry J. Pettengill
Deputy Assistant Secretary for Health
United States Department of Energy
Washington, D.C. 20585

Dear Dr. Pettengill:

I regret that I was unable to meet with you and other officials of the Department of Energy in Hawaii in December. In my absence, I was ably represented by Chief Secretary Phillip Kabua. I am told that the discussions were very productive for the many participants from the U.S. Government and the Marshall Islands. I was especially pleased that you were able to release to officials of the RMI Government information on the yields of nuclear tests conducted in the Marshall Islands that previously had been classified.

The declassification of Marshall Islands test yields coincided with a broader declassification by the Department of Energy of information about medical tests that the Atomic Energy Commission conducted on human subjects in the United States. These revelations are of grave concern to the leadership and general public of the Marshall Islands. To address some of the issues that have been raised in recent weeks, I request your assistance in providing the RMI Government with additional information about the tests in the Marshall Islands.

First, my government requests confirmation of the actual number of nuclear weapons tests conducted in the Marshall Islands. It is commonly understood that there were a total of sixty-seven such tests, with twenty-three at Bikini Atoll, forty-three at Enewetak Atoll, and the April 28, 1958, "Yucca" device that was detonated from a high-altitude balloon northeast of Enewetak Atoll. Please provide confirmation as to whether these totals are complete and accurate and whether any additional tests were planned or implemented at Bikini, Enewetak, or any other locations, whether on land, on water, or in the atmosphere within the currently recognized international boundaries of the Republic of the Marshall Islands. In the December 7, 1993, news release that you provided to Chief Secretary Kabua with the declassified test yields, it was announced that one-fifth of all United States nuclear tests had previously been kept secret; this

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news has been received with considerable alarm in the Marshall Islands and is the basis of this first request.

Second, it is requested that the Department of Energy provide information on the fission yields of the thermonuclear tests conducted in the Marshall Islands. It is my understanding that this information may be readily available from the Department of Energy or its contractors and may not have to go through the process of declassification. This information will be of importance to the RMI Nationwide Radiological Study as it completes its work in the months ahead.

Third, the RMI Government requests that it be provided with copies of all information, including newly declassified documents, that the Department of Energy presents to the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Natural Resources in reply to the January 3, 1994, letter to President Clinton from Chairman George Miller in which the Committee requested documents from the Department of Energy and other agencies giving information on the true scope and full effects of United States nuclear testing in the Marshall Islands.

Fourth, my government requests all documents, including weather reports and any subsequent summaries or investigations, pertaining to the decision by the U.S. Government to proceed with the March 1, 1954, Bravo test.

Fifth, the RMI Government requests all reports pertaining to the radiological condition of Runit Island in Enewetak Atoll. In particular, my government would like all documentation on the discontinuation by the Defense Nuclear Agency of the 1977-1980 Enewetak cleanup without Runit Island having been completely decontaminated.

Sixth, my government requests that it be provided with all documents relating to fallout from the "Mike" test that was detonated at Enewetak Atoll on October 31, 1952. My government is especially interested in obtaining information about fallout from this test that was deposited at Ujelang Atoll.

Seventh, please provide a complete listing of all islands used at any time during the testing program as monitoring stations, including information as to how much land on each island was used for such stations and for support of monitoring personnel, for what periods of time, and to what extent trees or vegetation were removed from the land used for these stations.

Eighth, the Department of Energy is asked to provide any and all data relating to fallout and other radiation exposure measured at monitoring stations within the Marshall Islands during the testing program.

Ninth, the RMI Government requests a complete and detailed accounting of any and all monitoring visits to islands and atolls throughout the Marshall Islands, including the dates of such monitoring, the fallout and exposure data measured, and the means of transportation for monitoring personnel (such as the names of the vessels that carried them to and from the monitoring sites).

Tenth, the Department of Energy is asked to provide a complete and specific listing of all instances in which any people of the Marshall Islands were relocated in connection with the U.S. Nuclear Testing Program. This information should include the number of people removed from each location, the destination and duration of each relocation, and the physical condition of each individual prior to and at the conclusion of the relocation.

In light of the very strong concerns of my countrymen about the medical and environmental effects of the U.S. Nuclear Testing Program in our country, I hope that responses can be provided to these inquiries on an expedited basis. This information is requested in accordance with Article XIII, Section 3(a) of the Agreement Between the Government of the United States and the Government of the Marshall Islands for the Implementation of Section 177 of the Compact of Free Association.

I remain most grateful to you for arranging the declassification of the yield data. I expect that the additional information requested in this letter can be made available on the same cooperative basis that has characterized the working relationship between the Department of Energy and the RMI Government during the past several years.

Sincerely yours,

Tom D. Kijiner
Minister of Foreign Affairs