

Minister
of Energy, Mines and Resources



Ministre
de l'Énergie, des Mines et des Ressources

The Honourable L'honorable

Marcel Masse

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The Honourable Lee M. Thomas
Administrator
U.S. Environmental Protection
Agency
West Tower, Room 1200
401 M Street S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20460

Dear Mr. Thomas:

I wish to thank you for meeting with me last week to discuss your agency's proposed rule regarding asbestos.

As I noted in our meeting, the Government of Canada remains seriously concerned about the proposed rule and the science used to justify the need to ban. In this context, the recent informal hearings on asbestos clearly established that there existed disputed issues of material fact which should be central to the EPA's eventual decision on a final rule. The view of the Canadian Government is that the best approach to resolve these differences would be to initiate a formal hearing process. This should include full cross-examination privileges for all parties. Consistent with the need for the fullest examination of the disputed areas, we would hope that such formal hearings could be initiated and the process of rulemaking advanced as quickly as possible.

I am happy to say that following our meeting, I am now optimistic that this is indeed the course which your agency will be following.

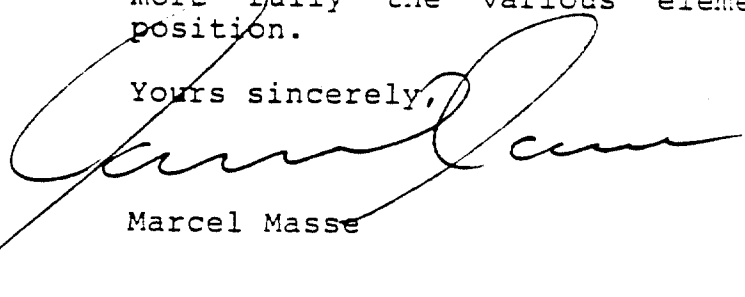
My Government and I are committed to the controlled-use approach for asbestos. I assure you that, given the history of the occupational use of asbestos and its consequences, this policy was adopted only after the most exhaustive examination of the best available scientific and medical evidence.

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We have the utmost confidence in the viability and responsibility of our position. We now look forward to the formal hearings wherein we expect a fair examination of all the relevant evidence will be achieved and seen to be achieved.

Lastly, I have taken the liberty of enclosing a copy of my speech to the Asbestos Information Association/North America, as I think it develops more fully the various elements of the Canadian position.

Yours sincerely,



Marcel Masse

Encl.

c.c. Ambassador A.E. Gotlieb
Canadian Embassy
Washington