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April 25, 2006

Deputy Director Dr. Thomas Sinks
U.S. Department of Health & Human Services
Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry
Division of Health Assessment & Consultation
1600 Clifton Road
Atlanta, GA 30333

Re: Follow up to telephone conversation on April 12, 2006

Dear Dr. Sinks,

I appreciated receiving your phone call of April 12, 2006 expressing ATSDR's willingness to explore the option with the Ottawa County Commissioners and the Board of Health to implement a public service to the residents of Ottawa County. This option would address community concerns and the needs of the entire community regarding potential beryllium health issues.

As I stated in our conversation, I remain very concerned that the ATSDR blood-testing plan, as currently proposed, cannot be interpreted in a meaningful way based on sound science, either as individual test results or as aggregated results. By way of parallel, the ATSDR re-tests of blood from nine persons in Tallevast, Florida resulted in not one of the nine people receiving confirmation of their first test result. These nine people now have to live with the uncertainty, which results from using a very unreliable test. In addition, the time that has passed between the first test results being reported in aggregate until the most recent report has left the entire community in an anxious limbo for months. In addition, the variability of the most recent test results will ensure that the nine tested individuals and the entire community will remain in limbo. Given these results, consideration of a similar testing program in Elmore is especially troubling. In light of your statement that ATSDR believes no immediate health concern exists in Elmore and has found no evidence that supports a case study investigation at this time, it is the opinion of the commissioners' and our independent medical expert that the current ATSDR Elmore plan will do much more harm to the community than good.

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During our conversation, you requested a plan as to how the Ottawa County Board of Health would propose to implement a public service to the residents of Ottawa County regarding potential beryllium exposures. I have requested that Health Commissioner, Nancy Osborn and the Ottawa County Board of Health develop a plan for your review and input. This plan would meet the needs of the entire community and address any community concerns. As you well know, the development of an effective, well considered plan will take time. However, I have asked the Board of Health to expedite its plan development and target completion for June 2, 2006. I would suggest we plan to meet with the ATSDR to review the county's plan the week of June 12th.

I am confident that the Ottawa County Board of Health, with the benefit of funding from the ATSDR, can develop and implement a public service to the residents of Ottawa County that addresses community concerns and best serves the needs of the entire community.

Sincerely,

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS,
OTTAWA COUNTY, OHIO

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cc: The Honorable Michael DeWine
The Honorable George Voinovich
The Honorable Marcy Kaptur
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