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APPENDIX A-LETTER OF REQUEST

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COMMITTEE ON
GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20510

May 7, 1979

The Honorable Morris K. Udall
Chairman
Technology Assessment Board
Office of Technology Assessment
U. S. Congress
Washington, D. C. 20510

Dear Mo :

As YOU KNOW, the Committee on Governmental Affairs is presently considering S. 333, the Omnibus Antiterrorism Act of 1979. Section 303 of the legislation would mandate the use of identification and detection taggants in explosive materials.

During the course of our consideration of the bill, several issues have been raised pertaining to the viability and cost of the tagging program. While there has been a great amount of technical reserach in this field, we believe it would be useful to have an independent review and evaluation of the available data concerning the use of explosive taggants.

Specifically, we request that the Office of Technology Assessment review this data, and address the following issues:

- the safety of the use of taggants in production, storage, and handling of explosive materials;
- the effectiveness of the tagging program in deterring crime and aiding in criminal investigation and prosecution;

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- the regulatory impact of requiring the use of explosives taggants (including record-keeping, cost to the explosives industry, and cost to the consumer) ;
- the potential effects of a partial application of tagging requirements (such as excluding black and smokeless powders and including all other explosive materials, excluding military, and materials for homemade bombs and common nitrate) ;
- 8 the issues relating to the survivability of taggants, including effects of detonation, retrieval, and possible removal before detonation; and
- possible alternatives to tagging explosives and initiators.

Because of the Committee's tight schedule and the desire to enact comprehensive anti-terrorism legislation promptly, we would appreciate receiving a report from OTA not later than August 6, 1979.

Many thanks for your cooperation and assistance.

Sincerely,



Abe Ribicoff

Jacob Javits

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