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Hon. Shri Nitish Kumar
Chief Minister
Government of Bihar

Dear Mr. Kumar,

As you have learned by now, over 50 countries have banned the use of all forms of asbestos because of unacceptable dangers to public health. Public reaction to the rampant growth of asbestos use in India has taken the form of *Mahadharnas* against the construction of new asbestos product factories. Opposition to asbestos use has closed down the asbestos mines in Canada and is on the verge of doing the same in Brazil. This will leave as the major asbestos mining countries only Russia, China, and Kazakhstan.

Most of the world has followed the urgings of the World Health Organization (WHO) and the example of the World Bank to stop using asbestos in new construction. Use of asbestos in building homes and workplaces now leaves a legacy of lethal dangers for workers and building occupants for the rest of the century.

I am writing as a public health worker who has worked as a consultant on asbestos to the WHO and the World Bank, in addition to working with public health advocates in India, in hopes that you will side with the protesting villagers who do not want new factories producing asbestos products built in Bihar. This is enormously important in protecting public health and can serve as an example for the rest of India in reducing the impact of a public health disaster in coming decades.

I would be happy to answer any questions you may have by correspondence now and expect to be in India later this year.

Sincerely,