GENERAL ELECTRIC COMPANY RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT CENTER
TOKYO OFFICE - Azabu Crest Bldg.
12-8, Roppongi 4-chome, Minato-ku, Tokyo, 106 Japan

Refer inquiries and correspondence to:
Mrs. Mary Jane Baird, Research and Development Center
P. O. Box 43, Schenectady, New York 12301, DIAL COMM 8*235-5068,
quoting this letter's reference number MM-72-73.

April 10, 1972

R.W. Roberts
Research & Development Manager
Materials Science and Engineering
General Electric Co., RDC
Schenectady, New York 12301

cc: WD Bellamy
RE Brooks
JF Brown
WR Kanne
RA Kochler
OH LeBlanc

Subject: Power Generation Company to Drop PCB-Containing Equipment

On Monday, (March 3) Kansai Electric Power Company (Osaka) notified domestic makers of transformers, capacitors and other heavy electrical equipment accessories of its decision to stop using any equipment containing polychlorinated biphenyl (PCB). Kansai is the second-largest of Japan's nine electric power utility companies. This is just one more act on the part of government and/or industry in the face of mounting public pressure over the PCB pollution problem. Kansai thus became the first Japanese power company to discontinue the use of all equipment containing PCB as a insulator. Kansai officials have said that equipment purchases will be made only from those companies that have switched to mineral-oil.

This means that the so-called "dry" type of equipment - used extensively in Japan until about 30 years ago - is expected to make a comeback. Kansai has made the demand retroactive to cover equipment already on order. As a further precaution against possible pollution, the approximately 3,250 PCB - containing units now in use in Kansai installations will be watched closely for leakage.

It is particularly interesting to note that the power generating companies and railway systems are exempt from the recent MITI ban on the use of PCB in electrical equipment. Even so, Kansai has elected to discontinue use of PCB containing equipment (public image ?) and it is expected that the other eight power companies will follow suit.

M.J. Moore

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Scientific Representative

MJM/tn

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