Dear Ms. McManus:

Thank you for writing us expressing your concern about the PCB issue. Unfortunately, press coverage of the subject has failed to explain the issue beyond the obvious headlines. For months, we have attempted to supply the press with facts concerning PCB and the responsible actions Monsanto has voluntarily taken to restrict sale of the product to only very essential uses. These include electrical transformers and capacitors where the fire-resistant features of PCB protect human lives and property from the danger of fire and explosion.

Too often, the lay press prefers to publish only what they consider to be sensational news.

To illustrate this point, and since your letter mentioned DDT, I am enclosing a copy of testimony given before the Congressional Committee on Agriculture. I think you will find it very informative. You will also agree that it received little or no press coverage. Therefore, it is very difficult for you or I, as individual citizens, to draw logical conclusions based only on news media coverage of a subject.

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More to the point, however, is your sincere concern about PCB. Rather than try to explain in a letter this very complicated subject, I am enclosing some previously published articles which may help you understand it. If you were to examine the volumes of scientific literature on the subject, you would find it even more complex. Qualified scientists do not yet agree on the effect PCB has on the environment. Their studies are continuing.

Some studies have shown that certain forms of PCB are persistent and can build up in the environment. For this reason, Monsanto has voluntarily undertaken the program described in the enclosed articles. We believe it is premature to conclude that PCB is destroying nature.

PCB is a relatively new problem. It was not until 1966 that scientific instruments were capable of identifying it in the environment. Since then we have worked diligently to help the scientific effort throughout the world; restricted sales to only the most essential, closed-system uses, thus reducing further entry into the environment, and accelereated our research program to develop suitable substitutes which retain the safety features of PCB.

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These efforts alone will not solve the problem as there are several other PCB producers in other countries.

You suggested we must "feel guilty" about our participation in the destruction of God's wondrous works. On the contrary, Monsanto has taken a balanced and responsible position on this issue. Our voluntary efforts will help preserve the environment we all must share.

I hope this letter and accompanying material will provide you with a new perspective on the subject of PCB. If you have further questions, I would be pleased to hear from you.

Sincerely,

H. W. Barber

Enclosures