Monsanto

FROM (NAME & LOCATION) St. Louis - General Offices

DATE : April 21, 1970

SUBJECT :

REFERENCE : PCB's

TO : FILE

CC: J. R. Eck
T. K. Smith, Jr.
H. L. Minckler
C. J. Smith
R. E. Kelly/E. P. Wheeler
H. S. Bergen
J. E. Springgate
W. B. Papageorge
Sam Pickard, Wash., D.C.

MS

Aroclor Toxicity

Circulates
1) ~~D. Olson~~
2) ~~Dr Wm Pickard~~
3) HS Bergen/MS

REPORT ON MEETING WITH
CONGRESSMAN WM. F. RYAN (DEM.)
20th DISTRICT - NEW YORK

Washington, D.C., April 16, 1970

Sam Pickard and I met with Congressman Ryan this afternoon. We told Mr. Ryan that the purpose of our visit was to enable him to raise any questions he might have in relation to Monsanto's involvement in the manufacture of PCB's and also we hoped that he would give us an opportunity to clarify some of the points which he had made during his press conference. He explained that he was extremely short of time but he was quite willing to discuss the situation with us, emphasizing that he hoped that he would still receive a formal response to his letter to Mr. Bock. We assured him that this would be replied to in due course.

We were impressed with Ryan's apparent understanding of the problem although he disclaimed any abilities in the scientific area. His questions led us to the conclusion that at his press conference he was not simply reading something that someone else had written for him. He assured us that on at least two occasions that his total interest in the matter was to safeguard the health of the public and we confirmed that we also had a similar concern.

The following is my recollection of the issues that were raised by Ryan and ourselves.

1. Referring to his press release, we explored the question of the toxicity of Aroclors in more detail. We indicated to him that we were extremely concerned that the stories in the press would cause undue concern in the public mind. He was advised that based on the work we have done on toxicity of the Aroclors we believe these materials are only mildly toxic and compare favorably with many other industrial chemicals. We pointed out that the information he had given to the press obviously came from one of our technical bulletins and was extracted from a standard warning issued to operatives processing Aroclors in large quantities and usually at high temperatures. We indicated that any PCB's currently being found in the environment were at extremely low levels and there was absolutely no danger to the health of the public. Ryan

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explored this subject in more detail and was particularly interested in the health of our own operatives who were manufacturing Aroclors on a continuing basis. We told him that we had been producing Aroclors for close to 40 years without any serious problems to the health of our operatives.

2. We advised Ryan that his implication that all Aroclors could be classified as PCB's was erroneous. We endeavored to explain that only a certain number of our Aroclors fall into this category and we use the Aroclor trademark for other materials as well. He appeared genuinely concerned that he had made an error here and this point was discussed at some length. We believe that we helped to clarify his mind. It was difficult to get across the point that the PCB's so far found in the environment were those containing five and six chlorines only and some progress was made. This subject should be pursued at any future meeting.

3. Ryan repeated his request that Monsanto should disclose their total manufacture of PCB's both in the United States and in the U.K. We pointed out that it was not normal for manufacturers to disclose such information and before we could agree to his request we would have to receive a guarantee that this information would be treated as strictly confidential by any government agency to whom the details were given. He was not too pleased with this suggestion and we did not pursue the subject further.

4. Ryan then turned to the subject of our disclosing the names of manufacturers making products containing PCB's and requesting that all these products be labeled accordingly. We pointed out that it was not possible for Monsanto to disclose such information without approval from each individual customer and we also had no power to compel them to label their products as containing PCB's. He appreciated this point (referring to the fact that it might be necessary for the Federal Government to direct that the products be labeled in this way), but he did consider that Monsanto had a duty to do everything possible to persuade their customers to take such action voluntarily. Further discussion in this area made it clear that his primary concern here is that PCB's are being used in the manufacture of household products which are handled by the public and could have an adverse effect on their health. We confirmed again that in our opinion this was not a problem as the quantities of Aroclors used would not have any adverse effect on public health.

   He returned to this subject several times listing such products as paints, inks, garment coatings, food packaging and flooring as products where problems may exist. We did everything possible to satisfy him that Aroclors were not used to any extent in these articles and that the major use for Aroclors was in the electrical

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industry primarily in transformers where the material was operating in closed systems. We made the point that the use of Aroclors for this type of application was extremely important to the nation as a whole in view of their fire resistant properties and the fact that Aroclor-containing transformers are much smaller in size than transformers using other forms of coolant which made them particularly suitable for use in heavily built up areas such as New York.

5. Ryan raised the use of PCB's as pesticide carriers and we advised him we had already written to the USDA requesting that they refuse registration of pesticide formulations containing Aroclors. He was advised that current usage in this application was extremely small and like many recommendations made in our old bulletins no real market had developed.

6. Emissions from our manufacturing plants were queried by Ryan and we made it clear that it had been Monsanto's practice for many years to control such emissions from all of our manufacturing operations. We also advised him that in view of the current concern over PCB's in the environment we had made significant improvements and had a program in hand which would ensure that any such emissions were completely controlled.

Congressman Ryan's time was somewhat limited and the meeting was terminated after about 30 minutes. However, he expressed himself as being interested in a more detailed discussion with Monsanto emphasizing that he would like to have a scientist present with him and also underlining once again that his real interest here was in protecting the safety of the public. We gained the impression that Ryan was genuinely concerned that some of the statements he had made to the press were not strictly accurate and he appeared to be a man who wants to be certain that any statement he makes is true and factual.

We recommend that Mr. Bock reply to Congressman Ryan's letter giving definite answers to the questions raised, and also mentioning our willingness to hold further discussions at a suitable time.

JOHN MASON

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