Tuesday October 5, 1976

STATEMENT BY EPA ADMINISTRATOR RUSSELL E. TRAIN CONCERNING MONSANTO'S DECISION TO STOP MANUFACTURE AND SALE OF PCBs

The Monsanto Company's voluntary decision to discontinue the manufacture and sale of Polychlorinated Biphenyls (PCBs) by October 31, 1977 represents a major step toward eliminating the use of this substance and its associated threat to human health and the environment. I welcome this development and commend the Monsanto Company on its decision.

A year ago EPA undertook a series of activities designed to examine and deal with the PCB problem which had become one of national dimensions. In December I announced a PCB action plan to focus the efforts of government and industry on solving this problem. I indicated then that although the government had no comprehensive regulatory authority to deal with the problem, our national goal should be to phase out all uses of PCBs as rapidly as possible. I am gratified by the cooperation of industry -- both manufacturer and user -- that has led to the Monsanto decision.

Since last December, EPA has been working with Monsanto, the major manufacturers of transformers and capacitors, and other Federal agencies to encourage the development of safe and environmentally acceptable alternatives.

Environmental contamination will continue to be a problem due to the millions of pounds of PCBs already in landfills, soils, river and lake sediments, in our air and water, and in wildlife and human tissue. This contamination will be there for years, moving into life systems, including humans. These problems still need to be addressed vigorously by government and industry. However, the Monsanto decision is a significant step in dealing with the total problem of PCB contamination.