

STATEMENT BY ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY ADMINISTRATOR,
RUSSELL E. TRAIN, AT A PRESS CONFERENCE ON PCB's, MONDAY,
DECEMBER 22, 1975, WASHINGTON, D.C.

I am announcing today an EPA action plan to reduce, as rapidly and effectively as we can, the serious threat of polychlorinated biphenyls (or PCB's) to human health and the environment. Since their introduction some 45 years ago, PCB's have been used in a variety of commercial and industrial products such as transformers, capacitors, paints, inks, paper plastics, adhesives, sealants and hydraulic fluids. Because of this wide use and because PCB's do not readily degrade, we find, today, that they are widely dispersed throughout the environment--in landfills, soils, river and lake sediments, in our air and water and in wildlife and human tissue. Of particular concern, we are currently finding PCB levels exceeding the FDA limit of five parts per million in fish taken from the Great Lakes, the upper Mississippi River, off the Southern California coast, ~~in the Hudson River and other~~ in the Hudson River and other waterways in New York State. PCB's are known to cause significant adverse effects in fish and aquatic life at these and lesser levels. In addition, they have been found in laboratory tests to cause reproductive failures, gastric disorders, skin lesions and tumors in mammals. Consequently, we believe that PCB's constitute a significant hazard to human health and the environment and must be immediately and effectively controlled with every means at our disposal.

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Exhibit A-1

Because of this hazard and our finding that the environmental burden from PCB's is already too great and is growing, it is plain to me that we must, as a society, accept and work toward a goal of totally eliminating the production, importation and use of PCB's as rapidly as possible.

Furthermore, we must make every effort to assure that those PCB's now in use do not enter the environment. At the same time, the public should be under no illusions as to the difficulty of dealing with this problem. We have absolutely no authority under existing law to stop or restrict uses of PCB's. Until the passage of Toxic Substances Control legislation by the Congress, we must rely heavily on voluntary actions by industry. In any event, it will not be possible to eliminate the use of PCB's overnight. Even if we could eliminate these uses immediately, we would have to face the fact that there are hundreds of millions of pounds of PCB's out there in the environment--in landfills, soils and the bottom sediments of rivers, lakes, and estuaries--which will be there for years, like a delayed-action time bomb, and which we have no way to keep from moving into life systems, including humans. With all that we can do, it may take many years before we are able to see a significant decline in the levels of PCB's in the environment. Nevertheless, we must begin at once. Even though our authorities are inadequate, we must do all that we can. I am, therefore, taking the following steps:

1. I am directing our regional offices, in active cooperation with the states, to immediately establish requirements to virtually eliminate PCB's from the process wastes of all

manufacturers of PCB's and of capacitors and transformers that utilize PCB's.

2. I am calling on the leadership of the manufacturers of PCB's and the major manufacturers of transformers and capacitors to develop safe and environmentally acceptable alternatives for PCB's as rapidly as possible. I am scheduling a meeting in January with representatives of these manufacturers to discuss and lay out specific plans to achieve this end.
3. I am calling on the presidents of major electric utility companies and other major users of large capacitors and transformers, such as railroads, to assume responsibility for controlling the use and disposal of their PCB's. To this end, I am writing representatives of the companies and their principal industrial associations to meet with me in January to discuss how this might be accomplished as rapidly and effectively as possible.
4. I am proposing regulations to control the environmental damage that results from spills of hazardous substances, including PCB's. EPA will move as rapidly as possible to finalize these regulations after a public comment period.
5. I am writing State Governors to ask them to carefully examine and apply their authorities to deal with the PCB problem.
6. I am writing the heads of selected Federal agencies to ask them to immediately inventory their uses of PCB's and PCB-containing materials and to develop plans to assure adequate management and safe disposal of these materials.

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7. In addition to these steps, I am initiating a number of other programs to find ways of eliminating the environment discharges from other sources of PCB's including paper recycling operations, the investment casting industry, and the disposal of electrical consumer products which contain PCB's.

With regard to all of these actions, I would again like to caution that they will not lead to a quick and easy reduction of the current levels of PCB's in our environment and particularly in the commercial and sports fish taken from those waters most contaminated. Hopefully, the control of discharges will help arrest the rapid growth of the problem. Ultimately, however, only the elimination of PCB's will yield a significant and permanent solution.

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