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January 29, 1985

Ms. Nancy Matthews, R.N.
Health Coordinator
Skyline College
3300 College Drive
San Bruno, CA 94066

Dear Ms. Matthews:

Your recent letter of January 7 regarding PCBs in fluorescent lighting fixtures has been forwarded to me for comment.

The enclosed copy of page 37349 from the Federal Register Vol. 47, August 25, 1982 describes small capacitors including fluorescent light ballasts and includes, in paragraph 5, EPA's rationale for excluding these items from regulation under the present Toxic Substances Control Act. In effect, EPA states that "PCBs are rarely released from these capacitors during their use or from the equipment using the capacitors. Therefore, exposure risks to humans, food, feed, water, or the environment from use of these capacitors are low."

As to your question regarding biological effects and dangers of PCBs, I presume you are referring to these effects upon humans. To help answer this question, I am enclosing a publication by Dr. W. R. Gaffey which reviewed and summarizes the human exposure literature on PCBs up to about 1983.

Dr. Gaffey's review covered three exposed population groups including occupationally exposed humans who were in direct contact with PCBs for very long periods of time. In the case of the Brown and Jones worker study of over 2500 persons, over half of the cohort was exposed for 20 or more years. Dr. Gaffey's summary and conclusions are shown on pages 294 and 295. However, his final conclusion sums up my thoughts also on PCB human health effects.

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> "Taken as a whole, the epidemiologic studies find that high occupational exposures to PCBs may cause dermatitis of various kinds, but there are no other clinically observable effects, including the occurrence of cancer."

If you have other questions, I would be happy to discuss them. You may phone me direct at (314)694-4764.

Very truly yours,

John H. Craddock /dkr

John H. Craddock, Ph.D.
Product and Environmental
Safety Director

/dkr
Enclosures

bcc: J. G. Nassif
W. J. McCarville

P.S. I am also enclosing for your information a copy of our generic Material Safety Data Sheet on PCBs and a very recent (January 1985) publication by the American Council on Science and Health which again reviews the PCB health effects literature.

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