TAPE 1

This is Jim Sibison for the U.S.E.P.A. in Washington. In the following broadcast, EPA Administrator, Russell E. Train, comments on a subject of growing national concern - the contamination of fish in major waterways of the country with industrial chemicals called PCBs. PCBs stands for polychlorinated biphenyls and they are now mainly used as insulating fluids in electrical equipment. First, Mr. Train presents the extent of the problem:

"We now estimate that over the past 45 years some 1.4 billion pounds of PCBs have been produced in the U.S. Of that amount, more than half has already entered the environment through discharges to the air, water and land. Although some of this has been chemically or biologically degraded, the vast majority is contained in landfills, contaminated soil, bottom sediments of rivers, lakes and coastal waters. Unfortunately, there appears to be relatively little we can do to remove PCBs from the environment and it may be many years before some of our waters will again be suitable for recreational fishing."

PCBs are a significant hazard to human health and to the environment:

"Laboratory tests show that they cause reproductive failures, gastric disorders, skin lesions and tumors in mammals. Their destructive effects of fish and wildlife are well documented. The most serious potential health problems from PCBs which we are able to identify today would come from eating fish which contain a high level of PCBs."

The problem is nation-wide. He named some of the waterways where PCBs have been found:

"We have found high PCB levels in fish taken from the Great Lakes, the Upper Mississippi River, off of Southern California Coast, streams entering the Gulf of Mexico, and Hudson River and other waterways in New York State. The presence of PCBs in these waters threatens to destroy commercial and sport fishing and associated industries since contaminated fish are rendered unfit for human consumption and some fish become incapable of effective reproduction."

WARE 2

This is Jim Sibison for the U.S.E.P.A. in Washington.

The presence of PCBs, the short term for the industrial chemicals called polychlorinated biphenyls which are used mainly in electrical equipment, in many major waterways in the U.S. threatens to destroy much of our commercial and sports fishing. The reason is that fish severely contaminated with PCBs are rendered unfit to eat and can become incapable of effective reproduction. In the following broadcast, EPA Administrator, Russell E. Train, describes the problem. First, he explains that PCBs are everywhere.

"PCB contamination is pervasive in the environment. The most serious potential health problem from PCBs which we are able to identify today would come from eating fish which contain a high levels of PCBs."

Mr. Train has announced a number of EPA actions to cope with the PCB problem. Here are some of them:

"First, immediate establishment of requirements to virtually eliminate PCB from the processed waste of all manufacturers of PCBs and of capacitors and transformers that utilize PCBs. Second, the issuance of proposed regulations to control the environmental damage that results from spills of hazardous substances including PCBs. Third, a request to all state governors asking them to examine carefully and apply their authority to deal with the PCB problem."