

Monsanto

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June 7, 1982

Mr. Ronald Clark
Editorial Page Editor
ST. PAUL PIONEER PRESS
55 E. 4th Street
St. Paul, MN 55101

Dear Mr. Clark:

Your May 17 editorial on PCB chemicals wrongly assails industry's motives in seeking a review of the latest health-effects information on PCBs.

Contrary to your assertion that "those pushing for the review are eager to resume manufacturing and using PCBs," Monsanto Company, formerly the sole U.S. producer of PCBs, has no intention or desire whatsoever to resume PCB production.

Once PCBs had been judged an environmental problem, Monsanto took prompt and responsible action toward them. In 1972, the company voluntarily began phasing out the sale of PCBs for certain uses, and by 1977 had halted all PCB manufacture. This occurred two years prior to the 1979 federal ban on new production of PCBs.

Your editorial also states that industry studies of PCB effects "ought to generate more skepticism than optimism." Setting aside the patent unfairness in implying that all industry health-related research is suspect, you and your readers should know that the studies you cited (done by contractors for the Edison Electric Institute and the Chemical Manufacturers Association) are not original research but rather reviews of recent research done primarily by government agencies, universities and medical schools.

Among this work, for example, is a study performed by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health involving more than 2,500 electrical equipment manufacturing workers, more than half of whom were exposed to PCBs on the job in excess of 20 years. This study found no excess deaths among the workers nor any increase in mortality due to cancer, cardiovascular disease or neurological disorders. Similar findings have emerged from other epidemiologic studies.

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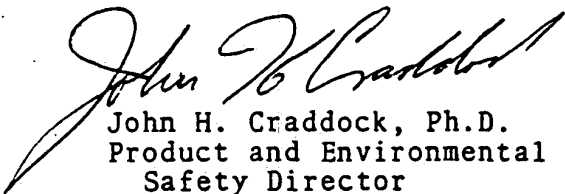
Mr. Ronald Clark

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Monsanto feels that an open-minded reading of the complete scientific record on PCB health effects leads a reasonable person to conclude that PCBs, while environmentally long-lived and a potential source of temporary dermatitis, are not human cancer agents nor are they associated with other long-term serious health effects. In short, the "sign of welcome relief" on PCBs rejected by you is entirely justified in our opinion.

Monsanto supports reasonable regulations and disposal requirements for PCBs. Again, we are not interested in going back into the PCB business. But we are concerned about overly zealous controls based upon incomplete science and an hysterical public fear of these compounds out of all proportion to their genuine risks.

Sincerely,


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

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enclosures 4: PCB News Release
PCB Health/Environmental Effects Fact Sheet
PCB Regulatory History Fact Sheet
PCB Production History Fact Sheet

bcc: S. G. Collins
L. J. O'Neill

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