R.A. Baxter, Ruabon.

19th October, 1971

P.J.A. Marsh, Brussels.
H.A. Vodden, Ruabon.

RAB/HMH

H.N. Dahlström,
c/o E.S. Robson,
St. Louis.

We reviewed our latest research findings on the biodegradability of PCBs at a business group meeting yesterday. The results we have obtained with specific organisms (pure cultures) show that all the significant components of both Aroclors 1016 and 1242 are eventually degraded. The half life of the most persistent 1016 isomers is in the range 10 - 15 days, while that for 1242 is 20 - 30 days. The conclusions to be drawn from these experiments are different from that of the St. Louis work with the semi-continuous activated sludge system which classifies both 1016 and 1242 as intractable. We believe that 1016 and possibly 1242 can be regarded as non-persistent; any build up in the environment will depend on the relative rates of degradation and release. Further information on the environmental situation will come from the so-called "pond" experiment which should demonstrate whether 1016 and 1242 do accumulate in fish in a system simulating natural conditions. Agreement to proceed with the pond experiment is needed as soon as possible.

In any case we think the time has come to publish the results we have already obtained in suitable scientific journals and to make it known to appropriate regulatory agencies. This will have the effect of demonstrating that the lower PCBs are not persistent and will counteract some of the misleading propaganda which has been leveled against them. It should also stimulate other scientists to carry out further work to settle some of the outstanding issues.

Clearly there are some differences in emphasis and interpretation between ourselves and St. Louis and we suggest that a necessary first step before publication is a detailed review and discussion of all our available results. To this end we suggest that Mr. Vodden should visit St. Louis as soon as possible and agree a course of action with the technical and commercial people there. Could you therefore let us know whether this plan meets with your and their approval.

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R.A. BAXTER