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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC

September 25, 1995

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The Honorable John DeVillars
Administrator
Region 1
EPA
JFK Building
Boston, MA 02110

Dear John,

I wanted to update you by telling you of some conversations I have had regarding the ultimate disposition of the PCBs in New Bedford.

As you know I am appreciative of the action EPA took in reversing the decision to incinerate and I believe that the process in which EPA and various citizen groups have been engaged is a good one. I also agree it is in everyone's interest for us to move as quickly as possible to complete the removal of the PCBs from the Harbor. Therefore, I am supportive of carrying out the current plans so that we will have a Harbor with no hot spots and with the contaminated material contained in the tanks.

But I hope we will not consider this to be the end of our efforts. That is, I believe that there should be a next step -- proceeding to the best technological method of destruction of the PCBs. I do not suggest in any way stopping or slowing down the current plans. My point is rather that once we have done everything we now plan to do, the next step should be the best possible method of physical elimination of the PCBs in an environmentally safe way. And I assume that it makes sense to proceed simultaneously with completion of the current plan of putting the contaminated material in the holding ponds, and with consideration of the best method of treating that contaminated water once it is in a position to be treated.

Because EPA and others did a good job of persuading people that the PCBs are dangerous, the notion of leaving the material indefinitely in tanks is one that understandably makes people nervous. Thus I think it makes the most sense for us to proceed as we are currently planning, and simultaneously to begin a decision making process to agree on a method of destruction of the PCBs to the extent that that is physically possible. I have been told by officials of the City of New Bedford that they believe that there is value to the tanks for other purposes, and obviously this is not contradictory to the notion of destroying the PCB material while thus retaining the holding tanks for whatever other purpose they will serve.


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