

April 29, 1999

Dr. Thomas Mack  
USC/Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center  
1441 Eastlake Avenue  
Los Angeles, California 90033

Dear Dr. Mack:

Thank you for agreeing to review the PCB cancer mortality study published by Dr. Renate Kimbrough and her colleagues in the March issue of the Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine (enclosed). The authors state in their conclusions, "This is the largest cohort of workers directly exposed to PCBs that was assembled specifically for the examination of the association between exposure and increased cancer mortality." The attendant press release and media coverage have described the study as "strong evidence that even long-term human exposure to PCBs at higher levels than are found in the environment is not related to an increase in deaths from cancer or any other diseases." Studies that elicit such strong statements require serious consideration in our risk assessment efforts.

While a number of EPA staff have carefully reviewed this study, we are asking you to assist us by providing some independent scientific comments on the study's design (strengths and weaknesses), analyses, results, and conclusions. We plan to use your input to inform our judgment as to the weight to ascribe to these findings in our future risk assessment and risk communication activities.

If you have any questions, please call me at 202-564-3269. Thank you in advance for your contribution that will enhance the scientific credibility of EPA's public statements about the potential health and environmental effects of PCBs.

Sincerely yours,

Jim Cogliano, Ph.D.  
Chief, Quantitative Risk Methods Group  
National Center for Environmental Assessment

Enclosure