

GNT-2072

The Department of External Affairs presents its compliments to the United States Embassy and has the honour to inform the Embassy of a motion which was passed on December 10, 1979 with the unanimous consent of the Canadian House of Commons.

As reported in the Debates of the House of Commons for December 10, 1979, the motion states:

"That the Government express its concern that the S.C.A. Company of the United States has been dumping thousands of gallons of PCBs and other harmful chemicals into the Niagara River on a daily basis, and urge the government of the United States to look directly into this matter and take what action is necessary so as to alleviate the potential danger of such a continued disposal method of harmful chemicals."

This motion reflects concern about a possible threat to human health and about the environmental effects of such discharges. Those concerns have been repeatedly expressed to the Government of Canada by many Canadian citizens living in the Niagara River region. The Department of External Affairs therefore requests that the Embassy inform the appropriate authorities within the United States Federal Government and in the State of New York of the text of this motion, and of the concern which has motivated it.

There have been many contacts between Canada and the United States at both the official and the technical level about the problems associated with environmentally safe methods of disposal of hazardous waste. The Government of Canada looks forward to continuing these helpful exchanges, especially in instances where boundary waters may be affected. On many occasions in recent years the International Joint Commission also has made reference to these problems and their potential for significant transboundary effects. Indeed, in its Sixth Annual Report on Great Lakes Water Quality the Commission refers specifically to problems experienced in Niagara Falls, New York. It is the view of the Government of Canada that the present concern about environmental and public health effects of the proposed direct discharges by SCA is symptomatic of a much larger problem of continuing degraded water quality in the Niagara River.

The Department of External Affairs avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Embassy the assurances of its highest consideration.

OTTAWA, Ontario

December 14, 1979

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