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NEWS RELEASE

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REDUCTIONS IN TOXIC CHEMICAL RELEASES HAILED AS MAJOR VICTORY

LOCAL COMPANY ANNOUNCES PLANS TO ELIMINATE METHYLENE CHLORIDE BY MAY 15

(Ann Arbor, MI) Johnson Controls Inc. recently announced their intention to stop using a cancer-causing solvent, methylene chloride, at their Whitmore Lake facility as of May 15.

The elimination of methylene chloride at the plant has been a major priority of the Ecology Center of Ann Arbor in their lawsuit with Johnson Controls. The Ecology Center sued Johnson Controls in September over alleged toxic chemical reporting violations required under the federal SARA Title III or Community Right to Know legislation. The announcement came while the Ecology Center is negotiating with the company to reduce its use of toxics and to improve worker and community safety.

“This is a major victory for the community and the workers,” said Tracey Easthope of the Ecology Center’s Toxics Reduction Project. “And the company benefits too in reduced costs and liabilities associated with the use of this toxic chemical.”

Methylene chloride is a probable human carcinogen, and has been targeted as one of the chlorinated solvents responsible for loadings of persistent toxics in the Great Lakes. The International Joint Commission, a binational organization

charged with protecting water quality in shared waterways, recently called for the elimination of the discharge of persistent toxins to the Great Lakes ecosystem.

"We applaud Johnson Controls for their responsiveness to community and worker concerns" said Charles Griffith, also with the Ecology Center. "This as an important first step. We hope this is an indication of the company's willingness to make other needed improvements. "

Karen Endres, chair of the citizen's group in Whitmore Lake which has been pressuring the company to respond to citizen concerns said, "The community is encouraged by Johnson Control's recent dialogue with the community, and is relieved by their announcement to immediately eliminate the use of methylene chloride. "

The Ecology Center has also asked the company to upgrade an antiquated production line in the plant to reduce worker exposures to toxic chemicals, to improve their accident preparedness and prevention, and to commit to a toxics reduction plan, among other things.

In 1990, Johnson Controls released 1.4 million pounds of methylene chloride, making them the second largest emitter of methylene chloride in the state and third in the Great Lakes basin. Johnson Controls was also one of the top three firms in Washtenaw County for total toxic releases.