

**TO:** Union Members, Johnson Controls, Whitmore Lake Plant  
**FROM:** Brenda Spencer, Chair, Bargaining Committee  
Don Watters, International Representative  
Bob King, Director, UAW Region 1-A  
**RE:** Opportunities to Improve Worker & Environmental Safety  
**DATE:** September 17, 1991

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The Ecology Center of Ann Arbor, a unionized (UAW) environmental group with members in Whitmore Lake, has initiated legal action against Johnson Controls for violation of environmental reporting requirements. The Ecology Center will be seeking a legally-binding settlement with the company that ensures full compliance with the law and that also makes improvements in workplace and environmental conditions at the plant.

The Union has agreed to work with the Ecology Center to help design a settlement that will result in reduced toxic chemical exposure to workers, and less pollution in the community. The Union will also be present during discussions between the company and the Ecology Center to negotiate a settlement. The Union will not be a party in the lawsuit, but will advocate for better workplace conditions, and will be consulted during the process.

The case against the company is good, and we expect the company may be willing to make changes to the plant rather than pay the considerable fines that could result from their violations of the environmental law. Modernizing the plant's equipment and reducing the use of toxics will improve competitiveness and help ensure compliance with future environmental and occupational standards. In seeking an agreement with the company, we will attempt to gain the best improvements that are economically achievable. The Ecology Center has assured us that this is their goal as well.

Among the demands to the company supported by both the union and the Ecology Center are: 1) Increasing worker safety training, 2) Modernizing Line 3 to reduce harmful worker exposures, 3) Eliminating the use of methylene chloride (and substituting safer alternatives).

The Ecology Center has taken the unusual step of approaching our union to discuss joint demands because they believe the combined strength of workers and environmentalists is great (and because they themselves are unionized). They also recognize that workers represent the first line of exposure to chemicals, and that any effort to reduce toxics must include workers. Environmentalists are beginning to recognize that the fight to reduce toxics must recognize the widespread contamination of workers throughout the country, before those chemicals even enter our environment.