Public Works

February 7, 1964

Fairchild Semiconductor Division
Fairchild Camera & Instrument Corporation
844 Whisman Road
Mountain View, California

RE: Trichloroethylene in Sewage Discharge

Attention Mr. Julius Blank, Vice President

Gentlemen:

Within the past month on three separate days critical quantities of trichloroethylene have been encountered in the sewage reaching the Mountain View Treatment Plant. On the two occasions where it was possible to investigate the source the Fairchild plant was apparently at fault in one case and was definitely found to be discharging trichloroethylene in the other case. The three occurrences of receipt by the treatment plant of trichloroethylene in the sewage are as follows:

January 8, 1964. Trichloroethylene was identified at the sewage treatment plant at 1:05 PM, and as a result the raw sewage was bypassed directly into the bay for three hours. The Fairchild plant was found by our Mr. William Cole, Sewer Foreman, to be the source. Mr. Cole and Mr. Eugene Downs, Public Works Superintendent, contacted your Mr. R. E. Friberg, and the trichloroethylene was found to be entering the City's sewers from a settling tank which has apparently been allowed to overflow.

January 15, 1964. Trichloroethylene was received by the sewage treatment plant some time between 8:00 PM, January 15, 1964 and 8:00 AM, January 16, 1964. The plant is unmanned during these hours. The sewage was consequently not bypassed and the trichloroethylene severely contaminated the No. 2 digester. This digester, one of two, has been out of operation since and may have to be completely drained. The source of the trichloroethylene was not identified.

February 3, 1964. Trichloroethylene was identified at the sewage treatment plant at approximately 5:00 PM, and raw sewage was bypassed directly into the bay for three hours. We were not able to prove positively through samplings that the Fairchild plant was the source, but the results of checks of sewer lines in the vicinity made it quite evident that this was the case.

The City of Mountain View has endeavored to work with your firm to insure that toxic or poisonous wastes are not discharged into the public sewers. The discharge of trichloroethylene into the sewers by your plant, as was definitely established on January 8, 1964, indicates that your present system is not adequate to prevent violation of the Mountain View sewer ordinance.

I wish to impress upon you the seriousness of this deficiency. Discharge of raw sewage into the San Francisco Bay, which must be done when trichloroethylene is received at the treatment plant to avoid rendering the digesters inoperable, is a menace to public health and welfare. It is in direct violation of Water Pollution Control Board requirements, and could result in an order from that Board which would force the City of Mountain View to expend several hundred thousand dollars for plant expansion ahead of schedule.

It is respectfully requested that immediate steps be taken by your firm to make the necessary plant and operational changes as may be necessary to prevent the discharge of trichloroethylene into the public sewers. Further discharges of toxic or poisonous wastes into public sewer by Fairchild will result in our enforcement of Ordinance No. 175.530, a copy of which is attached hereto, to the fullest possible extent.

Very truly yours,

A. M. McKinnon
Director of Public Works

TB

Extra copy
City Manager
City Attorney
Director of Public Works
Chief Building Inspector
Public Works Superintendent
Elliott
Pulliam
F/y