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Overview Memorandum/Press Release
Concerning Ingredient Usage in Cigarettes

The major American manufacturers of cigarettes today are providing to the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) a list of ingredients added to tobacco in the manufacture of cigarettes. The list is being submitted in compliance with the Federal Cigarette Labeling and Advertising Act, which was enacted by Congress in 1984.

American cigarettes have always contained the finest tobaccos. Non-tobacco ingredients are added mainly to refine taste and enhance smoking quality. Some are used as humectants, serving as moisturizers to stabilize and regulate the burning of tobacco, while others are used as preservatives. The most important use of ingredients, however, is as flavoring agents. The flavor of a cigarette is due primarily to the grades and blends of tobacco employed, but ingredients may be used to improve, mellow or modify the tobacco aroma to satisfy the desires of the consumer. Examples of such ingredients are menthol, used to produce a "cool" flavor in cigarettes, and various sugars, to sweeten the flavor of cigarettes.

Most of the ingredients on the list being delivered today to HHS have been used for decades in the manufacture of cigarettes. Most also are widely used in food products. The ingredients used in foods have been reviewed by the United

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States Food and Drug Administration (FDA), and a considerable amount of data has been developed concerning their safety. This data, which comes from published scientific reports and other sources, has been reviewed by FDA and other organizations responsible for assuring the safety of food ingredients. Common food ingredients that are used in cigarette manufacturing include, for example, cocoa and vanillin.

Many of the ingredients on the list also have been approved for use in tobacco products by governmental bodies in other countries. Hundreds of ingredients, for example, are approved for use in cigarettes by the British government. The British list, commonly referred to as the Hunter list, was developed by a medical and scientific committee appointed by the British government. Its second report, issued in December 1978, contained a list of ingredients that were considered acceptable for long-term use without danger to health. West Germany also has developed guidelines for the approval of ingredients, and these guidelines have resulted in approval of many of the ingredients on the list being submitted to HHS.

Nearly all of the ingredients on the list are present in cigarette smoke in very small amounts. For example, studies have shown that normally less than one percent of the ingredients added to a cigarette are present in tobacco smoke. Hence, if 10 micrograms of a particular ingredient is added to a cigarette, perhaps 0.1 microgram will be found in the smoke. A two-pack-a-day smoker therefore

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could be expected to receive a maximum of only 4.0 micrograms per day of the ingredient.

The list being produced today does not identify the companies that use individual ingredients. That information constitutes trade secrets entitled to protection under the Federal Cigarette Labeling and Advertising Act.

The cigarette manufacturers are not aware of any scientific proof that the ingredients used in domestic cigarettes pose any hazard to human health. In fact, two scientists who were extensively involved in the U.S. Government's programs regarding cigarettes made the following statement in a letter published by the Journal of the American Medical Association in 1979:

"We know of no scientific evidence that today's additives increase the toxicity of cigarette smoke."

The companies understand that scientists from HHS soon will begin reviewing the ingredients included on the list. The industry is ready to assist in that process, and intends to cooperate by providing additional relevant information that may be useful to HHS in reviewing the list.

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