PRESS RELEASES

May 18, 2001

Ecolab Announces Resignation

ST. PAUL, Minn.--(BUSINESS WIRE)--May 18, 2001--Ecolab Inc. announced today that L. White Matthews, III, it's Executive Vice President and Chief Financial Officer, will resign from the company to pursue personal interests. Matthews has been the company's CFO since 1999, as well as a member of the Board of Directors.

"White has made a substantial impact on the company during his tenure with Ecolab," said Allan L. Schuman, Ecolab's Chairman of the Board and Chief Executive Officer. "He has taken a strong financial staff to the next level, brought strategic leadership to the financial management of the company and led our successful efforts to acquire 100% ownership of Henkel-Ecolab, our European joint venture."

Ecolab will begin a search for a new Chief Financial Officer. In the interim, White Matthews will continue to serve as CFO and a member of the Board of Directors.

Ecolab is the leading global developer and marketer of premium cleaning, sanitizing, maintenance and repair products and services for the hospitality, institutional and industrial markets. Ecolab news releases and other investor information are available on the Internet at www.ecolab.com and by telephone at 1-800-FACT-ECL.

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