4.43 A coaxial resistor of length l consists of two concentric cylinders. The inner cylinder has radius a and is made of a material with conductivity σ_1, and the outer cylinder, extending between $r = a$ and $r = b$, is made of a material with conductivity σ_2. If the two ends of the resistor are capped with conducting plates, show that the resistance between the two ends is $R = l/[\pi(\sigma_1 a^2 + \sigma_2(b^2 - a^2))]$.

Solution: Due to the conducting plates, the ends of the coaxial resistor are each uniform at the same potential. Hence, the electric field everywhere in the resistor will be parallel to the axis of the resistor, in which case the two cylinders can be considered to be two separate resistors in parallel. Then, from Eq. (4.70),

$$\frac{1}{R} = \frac{1}{R_{\text{inner}}} + \frac{1}{R_{\text{outer}}} = \frac{\sigma_1 A_1}{l_1} + \frac{\sigma_2 A_2}{l_2} = \frac{\sigma_1 \pi a^2}{l} + \frac{\sigma_2 \pi \left(b^2 - a^2\right)}{l} \,,$$

or

$$R = \frac{l}{\pi\left(\sigma_1 a^2 + \sigma_2\left(b^2 - a^2\right)\right)} \qquad (\Omega).$$