



Eastern Research Group, Inc.

- M E M O R A N D U M -

DATE: Date
TO: Potential Peer Reviewer
FROM: Tom DeCoff
RE: Peer Review of Hudson River PCBs Reassessment Reports

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Eastern Research Group, Inc. (ERG), under contract to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), is in the process of identifying experts who might be appropriate to peer review a document on PCB reassessment. After reviewing the qualifications of potential reviewers, ERG will propose 5 to 7 experts to participate in the review. The following is additional background information and an availability form and conflict of interest screen to fill out and return to ERG by November 25, 1998.

BACKGROUND

During a 30-year period ending in 1977, approximately 1.1 million pounds of PCBs were discharged into the Hudson River from two General Electric (GE) capacitor manufacturing plants located in Fort Edward and Hudson Falls, New York. PCBs are classified by the EPA as probable human carcinogens.

A 197-mile stretch of the Hudson River from Hudson Falls to the Battery in New York City was classified as a Superfund site in 1983. EPA made an interim no-action decision in 1984. In 1990, EPA began the reassessment of the PCB-contaminated sediments in the upper Hudson River. Due to the size, complexity, and high level of public interest in this project, EPA decided to conduct the study in three phases, issuing reports to the public as the work progressed. Phase 2, the largest in scope, was further broken down into six segments. EPA's eventual remedial decision for this site will depend on the information contained in all three phases of the project and in all associated reports, and how that information fits together as a whole.

This project entails the review of two of the six Phase 2 Reassessment reports. The first report, entitled *Data Evaluation and Interpretation Report*, provides detailed descriptions and in-depth interpretations of the water column and dated sediment core data collected as part of the Reassessment. This report helps to provide an improved understanding of the geochemistry of PCBs in the Hudson River but does not explore the biological uptake and human health impacts, which will be evaluated in future Phase 2 reports. This report was released on February 13, 1997. Further information on the *Data Evaluation and Interpretation Report* can be found in the report's executive summary, accessible via internet at <http://www.epa.gov/region02/superfund/hrexesum.htm>. The second report, *A Low Resolution Sediment Coring Report*, is a companion publication to the first report and presents the findings from the analysis of data relating to the low resolution sediment coring program for the Hudson River PCBs Site Reassessment Study. The low resolution sediment coring program

was designed to evaluate changes in sediment PCB inventory over time and the degree of burial of PCB-contaminated sediments. This report was released in July 1998 and its executive summary is also available on the internet at <http://www.epa.gov/region02/superfnd/low-res.htm>.

REVIEWER RESPONSIBILITIES

Each reviewer will be allotted 100 hours to:

- Participate in one conference call, if requested, with ERG and EPA to discuss the peer review, the deliverables, and the agendas for the meetings.
- Review and evaluate these two Reassessment reports. Prepare detailed written comments on the reports that respond to the charge, specific questions, and instructions for the reviewers by late February 1999.
- Denote and, if practical, provide a copy of any relevant research that is not included in the reports.
- If significant problems are observed in the use of appropriate EPA methodologies, provide specific comments, in writing, describing the problems and making appropriate suggestions. Reviewer suggestions should be specific, clear and without any ambiguity, and must conform to existing EPA methodologies and guidelines.
- Provide all substantial comments and inserts in typed hard copy and on a diskette prepared using WordPerfect 6.1 by February 22, 1999.
- Attend and actively participate in two meetings. The first is a preliminary 2-day meeting and site visit to be held near the city of Albany, New York, the week of January 11th. The second meeting will be held March 16-18, 1999, in or around Saratoga or Albany, New York.

Please understand that this inquiry does not imply a commitment on ERG's part to use your services for this review, rather this inquiry provides us with information on your interest, availability, and qualifications to perform the review. Conversely, ERG understands that your response to our availability inquiry does not imply a commitment on your part at this time to perform the review. We hope to make our final selection of participants in December 1998. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Tom DeCoff at 781-674-7377 or tdecoff@erg.com (Fax: 781-674-2851). I look forward to your response. Thank you.

**Peer Review of Hudson River PCBs Reassessment
RI/FS Phase 2 Reports
Data Evaluation and Interpretation Report &
A Low Resolution Sediment Coring Report**

AVAILABILITY FORM

Please fill out both pages of the availability form and respond to all of the questions below, and fax your response to 781-674-2851, Attention: Tom DeCoff, by November 25, 1998.

Please fill out the following information for our records:

Name: _____

Title: _____

Organization: _____

Address: (No P.O. Boxes): _____

City: _____ State: _____ Postal/Zip Code: _____

Country: _____

Phone: _____ Fax: _____

E-mail: _____

Questions:

1. Are you interested in participating in the project? Yes No Maybe

If yes, please send us your current resume/CV. You may fax, email, or mail us a copy.

2. Are you available for approximately 100 hours of work during January/February/March 1999?

Yes No

Please circle the days you will be available during January through March to attend two meetings in the New York City to Albany area:

January				
M	T	W	R	F
				1
4	5	6	7	8
11	12	13	14	15
18	19	20	21	22
25	26	27	28	29

February				
M	T	W	R	F
1	2	3	4	5
8	9	10	11	12
15	16	17	18	19
22	23	24	25	26

March				
M	T	W	R	F
1	2	3	4	5
8	9	10	11	12
15	16	17	18	19
22	23	24	25	26
29	30	31		

3. Please indicate your level of expertise by placing an **H = High degree**; **M = Medium degree**; or **L = Low degree** of expertise by each of the categories listed below:

- ☐ River Sedimentology
- ☐ Low Resolution Sediment Coring
- ☐ Geochemistry
- ☐ Hydrology
- ☐ PCBs
- ☐ Analytical Chemistry of PCBs
- ☐ Anaerobic De-chlorination of PCBs
- ☐ Water Column Fate and Transport Modeling

4. Do you have any potential conflicts of interest (COI) in performing this task (please fill out the attached COI screening form)?

5. If you are selected, would a fee be required? **Yes No**

If yes, is the EPA authorized rate of \$xx/hour acceptable? **Yes No**

If not, what is your lowest government rate?

Consultants will be requested to review the reports and background information, prepare a written summary of their comments, and attend two meetings to discuss the reports, for a total of 100 hours of work.

6. Other comments:

I look forward to receiving this information from you by November 25, 1998. If you have any questions, feel free to call Tom DeCoff at 781-674-7377, or tdecoff@erg.com, or fax me at 781-674-2851. Thank you.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST SCREEN

Name: _____ Date: _____

Affiliation: _____

An "independent peer reviewer" is an expert who was not associated with the generation of the specific work products (i.e., the reports) either directly or by substantial contribution to its development or indirectly by consultation during the development of the specific product.

1. Are you currently employed by General Electric (GE) or have you or your company or organization received any funding, grants, contracts, or cooperative agreements from GE?
2. Are you currently employed by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) or have you or your company or organization received any funding, grants, contracts, or cooperative agreements from EPA?
3. Have you been associated with the generation of the specific work products directly by substantial contribution to their development?
4. Have you been associated with the generation of the specific work products indirectly by significant consultation during the development of these specific products?
5. Are there any other personal or professional circumstances that might pose a potential conflict of interest for your participation in reviewing these reports?
6. Do you read, converse, and write in English fluently?