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Hudson River Sloop CLEARWATER

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September 29, 1992

Constantine Sidamon-Eristoff
Regional Administrator
USEPA, Region II
Jacob K. Javits Federal Building
New York, NY 10278

Dear Mr. Sidamon-Eristoff:

Thank you for your letter of September 17th regarding our meeting with Congressman Hamilton Fish, Jr., and the subsequent article in the *Cornwall Local*. As you point out, Clearwater has previously raised the issues of the timeliness of EPA's Hudson River PCB Reassessment and the consideration in the reassessment of non-carcinogenic health effects of PCBs in other forums, and EPA has responded. However, these responses have not served to wholly alleviate our concerns.

We recognize that much of the delay in the reassessment timeline is a result of EPA's decision to conduct additional data collection and analysis, and we certainly understand the need for EPA to render a scientifically sound decision on this site. However, this site has been studied extensively for nearly two decades by state and federal agencies, including by EPA. The need for additional information must be balanced against the very real costs of additional delay; further dispersion of PCBs throughout the ecosystem and the continued potential for public exposure to unsafe levels of PCBs.

We are also concerned that, through its aggressive lobbying and public relations activities, ie. publication of its newsletter "Riverwatch" and briefings for liaison group members, elected officials and editorial boards, General Electric is unduly influencing the public perception of "how much study is enough":

- GE's suggestions that EPA conduct extensive research in order to formulate complex and detailed models of PCB transport and uptake in the estuarine ecosystem, and investigate other sources of PCBs in the New York Harbor area, would be costly and time consuming, but would be of only marginal value in shaping an appropriate course of action.

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- GE submitted voluminous comments on EPA's Phase 1 Work Report, requiring the expenditure of significant staff and consultant resources to formulate the required response.

- Most recently, G.E. has requested that EPA hold additional monthly meetings to discuss the Phase 2 Work Plan, despite having ample opportunity for discussion through its involvement in the Steering, Oversight and Science and Technical Advisory Committees.

With respect to the consideration of the non-carcinogenic toxicities of PCBs, EPA's comments at the Steering Committee and Oversight Committee meetings have helped to clarify the somewhat vague statement in the Phase 2 Work Plan that, "Should the ECAO fail to establish an RfD for PCBs, then an evaluation of the potential non-cancer toxicities associated with exposure to PCBs in the Hudson will not be reported." We remain concerned, however, that the door has been left open for the omission of compelling information on a wide range of very serious negative health effects resulting from PCB exposure.

We believe that the weight of evidence regarding neurological, developmental and reproductive effects of PCB exposure dictates the need for a policy decision by EPA, at the national level, that these factors will be incorporated into all future health risk assessments regarding PCB exposure. Given the large number of national Superfund sites involving PCBs, EPA should make the development of an RfD for non-carcinogenic toxicities of PCBs a top priority.

EPA's Community Interaction Program (CIP) provides a useful forum for the exchange of information and concerns regarding the reassessment. We wish to reiterate that our participation in the CIP will not preclude us from addressing this issue in other forums. The lack of public awareness of, and misinformation about, the seriousness of PCB contamination of the Hudson remains a serious problem, and one which we will continually seek to address.

Sincerely,
Bridget Barclay
Bridget Barclay,
Environmental Director

cc: Hon. Hamilton Fish Jr., U.S. House of Representatives
Ron Britzke, The Cornwall Local
Cara Lee, Scenic Hudson