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NEWS

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**EPA ANNOUNCES EXPERTS SELECTED TO PEER REVIEW COMPUTER MODEL USED
FOR THE HUDSON RIVER PCB SUPERFUND SITE**

(#98076) NEW YORK, NEW YORK -- The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) today announced the names of the experts who will serve on the Peer Review panel that will examine the scientific assumptions and approaches to be used by the agency in its computer modeling of the Hudson River PCB Superfund site. The modeling study is part of extensive work EPA has undertaken to understand the nature of the PCB contamination in the Hudson River. This work will be used to determine what action, if any, should be taken to address this problem. EPA is conducting a reassessment of its 1984 decision to take no action on the PCB-contaminated sediments in a 40 mile stretch of the Hudson River between Hudson Falls and the Troy Dam.

Peer review is conducted to ensure that the science upon which EPA makes its decisions is correct and credible. It addresses only the science on which decisions are based, not the decisions themselves. Under EPA's national policy, major scientific and/or technical work products such as those which are part of the Hudson River PCB Reassessment are subject to peer review.

Throughout the study, EPA has employed innovative technologies such as PCB "fingerprinting" in order to ascertain the origin, fate and transport of PCBs in the Hudson. Computer modeling allows the agency to forecast future trends in the river under a variety of scenarios.

"We are extremely proud of the innovative and sound scientific approaches we have taken in our Reassessment of the Hudson River PCB contamination," said Deputy Regional Administrator William M. Muszynski. "Peer review provides invaluable assurance that we are on the right track from respected and independent scientific experts."

Members of the Peer Review panel were selected by Eastern Research Group Inc., (ERG), a contractor specializing in this type of work. The Peer Review panel is made up of individuals with expertise in the subject matter under review. Each panel member has been screened for conflicts of interest and has been determined to be unbiased and independent of the project under review. The members of the panel are:

Ellen Bentzen, Ph.D., Research Scientist, Department of Environmental and Resource Studies, Trent University, Peterborough, Ontario, Canada

Miriam Leah Diamond, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Department of Geography, University of Toronto, Toronto, Ontario, Canada

James W. Gillett, Director, Superfund Basic Research and Education Program and Professor of Ecotoxicology, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York

Gordon Douglas Haffner, Ph.D., Professor, Department of Biological Sciences, University of Windsor, Windsor, Ontario, Canada

Alan W. Maki, Ph.D., Environmental Advisor, Exxon Company USA, Houston, Texas

Thanos Nicholas Papanicolaou, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, Department of Civil Engineering, Washington State University, Pullman, Washington

Frank Wania, Ph.D., Independent Research Scientist, WECC Wania Environmental

Chemists Corp., Toronto, Ontario, Canada

SITE BACKGROUND

EPA began the Hudson River PCB Reassessment in 1990 in order to review its 1984 decision to leave the PCB-contaminated sediments in the Hudson River in place. The site is delineated as the Hudson River from Hudson Falls to the Battery in New York City. The Reassessment, while looking at the entire River, concentrates its efforts on a 40-mile stretch of the River between Hudson Falls and the Federal Dam at Troy, which contains historical "hot spots" of PCB-contaminated sediments. These sediments became contaminated from the release of approximately 1.1 million pounds of PCBs discharged into the river over a 30-year period (1940's-1970's) by two General Electric capacitor plants at Hudson Falls and Fort Edward, New York. The PCB contamination of the Hudson River has resulted in health advisories on fish in the Lower Hudson (below Troy) and a total ban on consumption of any fish caught north of that location. PCBs are considered to be a probable human carcinogen by the EPA.

The Hudson River PCBs Reassessment Study is being conducted in three Phases, with the agency presently in the midst of Phase 2. The agency expects to have a draft of its decision to the public in December 2000, and a final decision on how to address this site in June of 2001.

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