

Bill McCabe - Action
NEED RESPONSE BY 1/31
THE LATEST -
MERRILYN PULVER
Councilwoman, Town of Fort Edward
R.D.1, Box 222
Fort Edward, N.Y. 12828
747-4985

LET'S DISCUSS
WHAT TO SAY
Muszynski
Ruth C. Caspe/Action

January 6, 1998

Ms. Jeanne M. Fox
Regional Administrator
Region 2
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
299 Broadway
New York, NY 10007-1866

USEPA-REGION II
EMERGENCY & OFFICIAL
RESPONSE
1998 JAN -8 PM 5:15
DIRECTOR'S OFFICE

Dear Ms. Fox:

I appreciate your reply to me and other members and chairs of the liaison groups for the Hudson River PCBs Reassessment.

In light of EPA's recent admission that Agency officials knowingly chose not to inform the public, local elected officials or the media about a study to identify potential sites in Washington, Saratoga and Rensselaer counties to landfill Hudson River PCBs and dredged sediment, our initial concerns with the failure of EPA's public participation program were well-founded.

I appreciate your commitment to issue responsiveness summaries for the Data Evaluation and Interpretation Report and any future reports issued during the Reassessment. I would ask that these be issued promptly after the deadline for comments so commenters know whether EPA read and understood their comments. EPA representatives acknowledged at a recent meeting that they had still not read comments sent in six months earlier! Prompt, substantive responses will provide the public with an opportunity to evaluate EPA's work.

In addition, I welcome your decision to schedule more public meetings on the Reassessment to foster more deliberation of several key technical controversies and policy questions. I believe public meetings must be conducted at least quarterly. It is critical for EPA to allow the public, at every meeting, to question EPA officials and consultants about any issue, study, data or research. Of course, a verbatim transcript should be made at each meeting. It was refreshing and educational that those who attended a meeting of the

318670

Hudson River Oversight Committee in November were given this privilege. In order to regain the public's confidence in its process, this open forum of ideas and questions must be allowed to continue.

Above and beyond these good first steps, more must be done to ensure that some oversight is brought into this process. EPA should not presume to oversee its own process and science. In order to renew my faith, and the faith of those I represent, I am asking EPA for the following:

- That a citizen or local elected official chair EPA's Hudson River Oversight and Steering committees and be given responsibility for setting agendas, conducting meetings and distributing verbatim transcripts of all meetings;
- That the Hudson River Oversight and Steering committees meet on no less than a quarterly basis;
- That EPA's technical efforts be reviewed and evaluated in public by the Science and Technical Committee that EPA established; and,
- That the public be given the opportunity to question EPA and its consultants at all public meetings, at all times and on all issues.

I look forward to hearing your response to this request at the next Hudson River Oversight Committee meeting.

Sincerely,

Merrilyn Pulver
Merrilyn Pulver