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UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION 2
290 BROADWAY
NEW YORK, NY 10007-1866

JUL - 9 1998

C. Scott Vanderhoef, County Executive
County of Rockland
Office of the County Executive
Allison-Parris County Office Building
New City, New York 10956

Dear Mr. Vanderhoef:

This letter is in response to your letter dated June 11, 1998 to EPA Administrator Carol Browner concerning delays to the Hudson River PCBs Site Reassessment Study.

EPA is aware of public concerns regarding PCB-contaminated sediments in the Hudson River. However, the Hudson River is a complex system requiring EPA to address and solve a number of difficult scientific issues before we can make a sound remedial decision for the PCB-contaminated sediments in the Upper Hudson River. EPA has not yet determined whether it will be appropriate or necessary to dredge in order to address PCB contamination in the Upper Hudson River. Such a decision will be made only after EPA completes the Reassessment of the Hudson River PCBs Site which will include a detailed characterization of the PCB contamination in the Upper Hudson River and the risks associated with that contamination.

The amendments to the Reassessment schedule are primarily the result of delays in our modeling program, our decisions to conduct peer review and to prepare individual responsiveness summaries, as well as a more critical analysis of the schedule elements. EPA's decision to prepare responsiveness summaries for each of the Reassessment Remedial Investigation reports, in addition to the single responsiveness summary required by the Superfund law is consistent with our desire to maintain an open and responsive dialogue with the public. In addition, in February of this year, an EPA review of its Peer Review Policy resulted in EPA's issuance of new guidelines which require peer review of all major scientific work products undertaken by the Agency which involve the use of scientific tools that have not been previously peer reviewed, or which involve the new application of existing scientific tools. Through peer review, it is the Agency's intent that the science will be reviewed by independent experts in an effort to ensure the credibility of that science. Certain aspects of the Hudson River PCBs Site Reassessment Study require peer review. While the application of peer review to the Reassessment will cause some delay, it is essential that at the end a decision for the Site be based on credible science.

The new schedule calls for the Agency to issue its Proposed Plan by December 2000 and the Record of Decision by June 2001. We believe that this schedule is as ambitious as possible in light of the significant work that remains to be performed. Consequently, we have increased the staffing assigned to this project and the Region's senior management will remain involved with all stages of this project in an effort to anticipate and resolve potential problems before they can disrupt the schedule.

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We hope that this letter addresses your concerns. I want to assure you that EPA is committed to completing the Reassessment expeditiously. EPA appreciates your interest in the Reassessment process, and we encourage you to continue to express your concerns regarding the Reassessment.

If you have any questions or require more information, please feel free to contact Ann Rychlenski at (212) 637-3672.

Sincerely yours,

Richard L. Caspe, Director
Emergency and Remedial Response Division



COUNTY OF ROCKLAND
OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

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New City, New York 10956
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C. SCOTT VANDERHOEF
County Executive
June 11, 1998

Ms. Carol Browner, Administrator
United State Environmental Protection Agency
402 M Street S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20460

RE: HUDSON RIVER PCBS

Dear Ms. Browner:


I write on behalf of the citizens of Rockland County. We were disappointed that the United States Environmental Protection Agency's decision regarding how best to remediate Hudson River PCBs has been postponed for up to three years.

Rockland County is located on the Hudson's western shore, just north of New York City. Although our County is small (174 square miles), our 280,000 citizens enjoy 27 miles of shoreline along the Hudson River. Our entire County lies within the Hudson River Greenway. Because of its importance to us, we have joined with other municipalities throughout the Hudson Valley to protect and improve this valuable estuary.

The Hudson River has always been an inherent part of our everyday life. There is a unique balance here between commerce, the natural environment, recreation and cultural heritage. This year, 1998 is our Bicentennial year. The centerpiece of our celebration was held over the Memorial Day weekend when the famous "Tall Ships" set anchor at our Hudson River municipalities. Thousands of people were drawn to the shore to participate in this joyous event.

We want to see the Hudson River healthy and uncontaminated by PCBs. We look forward to a future when Hudson River fish can be eaten safely without restrictions. The longer remediation is deferred, the more persistent PCBs become in the food chain. We call upon the EPA to concentrate its efforts to ensure that the Hudson River is expeditiously restored to its full environmental and economic potential.

Very truly yours,


C. Scott Vanderhoef
County Executive



Rockland County Bicentennial 1798-1998
Welcoming People for 200 Years

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cc President Bill Clinton

Vice President Albert Gore, Jr.

John F. Welch, Jr., Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, General Electric Corp.



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C. SCOTT VANDERHOEF
County Executive

June 11, 1998

Mr. John F. Welch, Jr.
Chairman and Chief Executive Officer
General Electric Corporation
3135 Easton Turnpike
Fairfield, CT 06431

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We want to see the Hudson River healthy and uncontaminated by PCBs. We look forward to a future when Hudson River fish can be eaten safely without restrictions. The longer remediation is deferred, the more persistent PCBs become in the food chain. Whatever decision EPA ultimately makes, we urge General Electric to assist expeditiously in restoring the Hudson River to its full environmental and economic potential.

Very truly yours,

C. Scott Vanderhoef
County Executive



Rockland County Bicentennial 1798-1998
Welcoming People for 200 Years

10.5921

cc Carol Browner, Administrator, United States Environmental Protection Agency