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JUL 22 1999

John E. Zweig, Supervisor
 Town of Poestenkill
 P.O. Box 210
 Poestenkill, New York 12140

Dear Mr. Zweig:

This is in response to your letter of June 25, 1999, to EPA Administrator Carol M. Browner and others, concerning the Hudson River PCBs Superfund site. Specifically, your letter states that the Poestenkill Town Board supports an independent peer review of all PCB-modeling studies developed for the Hudson River PCBs Superfund site.

With respect to the peer review process, I believe it would be useful for me to clarify for you some aspects of EPA's peer review policy to avoid any misunderstanding about the peer reviews being conducted for this site. EPA's policy generally requires the Agency to subject to peer review those major Agency technical work products, such as risk assessments and technical models, that are innovative or focus on significant emerging issues and serve to support Agency decision-making. At the Hudson River PCBs site, specific issues in EPA's scientific work are being reviewed in four distinct sessions. Two of the six reports prepared in connection with the Hudson River PCBs Reassessment -- the Data Evaluation and Interpretation Report and the Low Resolution Sediment Coring Report -- were reviewed earlier this year. EPA's Modeling Approach, including EPA's Preliminary Model Calibration Report, was peer reviewed in September 1998. The Baseline Modeling Report, which is EPA's modeling report for the site, and the Human Health and Ecological Risk Assessments, will be peer reviewed next year to ensure that all six scientific work products that support a remedy decision will receive a critical evaluation by independent experts.

The purpose of the peer review is to ensure that EPA's science is technically sound; it is not intended to be a forum in which the peer reviewers judge what they believe to be the best among two or possibly more scientific work products. EPA therefore will not provide a side-by-side peer review involving EPA's modeling report. Nevertheless, EPA has agreed to provide the peer reviewers with copies of public comments received on its reports and the Agency's responses to these comments, which are documented in responsiveness summaries. The responsiveness summary that will be provided to the peer review panel for EPA's Baseline Modeling Report will include a copy of GE's modeling report and EPA's response to that report.

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In addition, as with the prior two peer reviews for this site, the public will be invited to attend the peer review meetings for the Baseline Modeling Report, Human Health Risk Assessment and Ecological Risk Assessment. The public also will be invited to address the peer review panels for the upcoming peer reviews, just as the public was given the opportunity to address the expert panels for EPA's Modeling Approach and Data Evaluation and Interpretation Report/Low Resolution Sediment Coring Report peer reviews.

We hope that this letter addresses your concerns. 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

bcc: Ann Rychlenski, CD
Douglas Fischer, ORC



TOWN OF POESTENKILL

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June 25, 1999

Ms. Jeanne M. Fox, Administrator
Regional EPA
290 Broadway
New York, 10007-1866

Dear Ms. Fox:

The Poestenkill Town Board has gone on record supporting a thorough review of proposed solutions to problems created by PCB's in the Hudson River. In particular, we believe a sound scientific approach requires that any model on which remediation decisions are based be reviewed by independent highly qualified experts. This should apply to EPA models as well as any other model that purports to describe PCB behavior over time.

We request that you support this independent review process which will help ensure that all parties have confidence in the validity of remediation actions taken. More importantly, it can also ensure that the optimal solution is chosen to the benefit of all citizens in our area.

We very much appreciate your attention to this matter which is of great importance to so many in the Hudson Valley.

Sincerely,

John E. Zweig
Supervisor

CC: Town Board Members
Vivian Kelly, Town Clerk
Patrick Tomaselli, Town Attorney
Merrilyn Pulver, Councilwoman, Town of Fort Edward

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