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ORIGINAL

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Environmental Protection Agency

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In the Matter of:

HUDSON RIVER PCBs SUPERFUND SITE:
REMEDIAL ALTERNATIVES -
STATE OF NEW YORK

- X

1st Floor Conference Room
Sheraton Civic Center Hotel
Poughkeepsie, New York 12602

Thursday, December 14, 2000

Pursuant to Notice, the Public Meeting in the above-referenced matter commenced at 7:05 o'clock p.m.

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P R O C E E D I N G S

(7:00 o'clock p.m.)

MS. RYCHENSKI: Please take your seats. For those of you who are still in the back of the room, please come on down. There are plenty of seats.

There are seats down front, so please come on in so we can get started on time.

Welcome, and thank you all for coming out this evening.

My name is Ann Rychenski, and I am the Community Relations Coordinator for the Hudson River PCB Reassessment for USEPA.

As you all know, this meeting is for EPA to discuss their proposal for the clean-up of the Hudson River.

I will go quickly down the stage here so that you know who is going to be doing what.

Standing right here is Mr. Richard Caspe. He is the Division Director of the Emergency and Remedial Response Division of what is otherwise known as Superfund.

And Rich is going to be talking about the proposed plan itself. So, he is going to be responsible for that.

After that, we will turn it over to Doug Tomchuk, who is here to my immediate right.

He is the Project Manager for the site, and he is going to talk about some of the things that we found out during our investigations about the river so that we could see where it would lead us. It eventually led us to this point.

And the next speaker is Alison Hess. She is also a Project Manager on this site.

Alison will talk about the Feasibility Study and how we screened different types of alternatives to eventually get to where we are.

Next to Alison is Marian Olsen. She is an environmental scientist with the EPA, and she specializes in human health risk calculations.

To my left is Mr. Mel Hauptman. He is the Team Leader on containment of sediments in EPA.

And right there at the end of the table, last but not least, is Mr. Doug Fischer, who is our counsel.

I just want to go through a couple of ground rules, and remind you about why we are here tonight.

Most of you know what we are proposing and that we are here to take your comments.

Public comment is very important to EPA's public process.

We need to hear what you think and we need to hear from you loud and clear.

You can do that a couple of ways. You can do that by coming to meetings, like the one tonight.

You can come up to the mike and give your comments.

We have stenographers present this evening to take your comments down.

So, when you do come to the mike, please speak clearly, give your full name and spell your name, please, so that the stenographer can get a very, very clear record of the proceedings this evening.

You can also send your comments in. We have a comment period on this that extends to February 16th.

You can send your comments through close of business February 16th to Doug and Alison, and we will respond to those comments and respond to the summary later on down the road.

Just a couple of ground rules here. When you come to the mike to speak, you have two minutes. Everybody gets two minutes. We enforce two minutes. Enough said.

If you have not filled out an index card to come to the mike and you want to come up and ask a question or give comment, please do so.

Back out in the room where we have the exhibits, we do have index cards. Please fill one out, and they will be given to me up here at the platform.

As you can see, we have two signers here also for the hearing-impaired.

Now, I am going to turn it over to Rich. Thank you.

(Applause.)

MR. CASPE: Thank you. Just a couple of other points first: Don't you wish you could bottle this heat and take it home?

Hopefully, the room will get a little bit cooler.

Good evening. We are here tonight to present EPA's preferred alternative to the Hudson River PCB Site.

Normally, when we would propose a plan, we would have a pretty long presentation; we would have a presentation that would go an-hour-and-a-half to two hours.

That is not what we have planned. There are a lot of people here tonight. There are a lot of people who want to speak.

We are going to try to do this in a succinct manner. We should be able to finish in about half-an-hour, 45 minutes, with the overview; we will get done with that, and then we will open it up to public comments.

This is a time, really, where we are here to kind of show our facts.

You know, we have heard a lot of different opinions earlier on, but we have presented our facts in the last couple of days and printed over 5,000 pages of documents.

We do not, certainly, expect you to read those 5,000 pages, but there are also

executive summaries of those that have been circulated; there is a proposed plan that is only 31 pages.

There is a variety of documents. So, I would hope at the beginning, I think, that we are not speaking at each other but having more of a dialogue between people who wish to express their opinions; explain to people why we are doing what we are doing, and move on from there.

Thank you.

So, after 10 years of study, what do we know?

Well, we know that PCBs have serious health impacts.

We know that over one million pounds of PCBs were discharged into the Hudson River.

We know that PCBs live a long time in the environment. They do not go away.

We know that there is a substantial fish contamination in the Upper Hudson River; the fish levels are greater than 100 times what we believe would be something that would create no impact on people and the environmental animals that eat them.

We know that people are eating the fish despite the fish consumption advisories.

In 1996, the Department of Health did a survey in the Upper Hudson River, and found that one in six people surveyed had Hudson River fish in their possession; in fact, one in 10 had more than one fish in their possession.

We know that birds and animals are eating the fish.

We know that water column PCBs in the Thompson Island Pool, which is the uppermost section of the Hudson, the upper six miles of the Hudson, the area that is most contaminated, we know that, as the water flows over the sediments in that pool, the PCB levels in the water go up between three and four times; they go up by the order of three or four times.

We know there is an upstream source as well above that area from the GE Hudson Falls facility that absolutely needs remediation as well.

We know that fish contamination is nearly stable; that, in the last five to seven years, if you look at the PCB levels in fish and you look to see what kind of a trend you

have, you can see that there really is no trend; the trend is a flatline.

We know that the PCBs are not uniformly buried; that even though the River is not as depositional as most rivers are, that it is a river and it is dynamic.

And because it is being deposited in this one area, it does not mean that it is not eroding in another area.

In fact, we have found erosion in many areas.

We know that the PCBs are not being uniformly buried; that PCBs are not deep; that the cores we took in the Upper Hudson River, that 60 percent of those cores show the highest level of PCBs in the top nine inches.

We know that over 500 pounds of PCBs are flowing over the Troy Dam into the lower Hudson every year.

And we know that we have good science behind what we know because we have done -- we have had peer reviews at an unprecedented level.

We have had five peer review panels. They have reviewed all six of our studies.

They gave us a clean bill of health on five; they had problems with one.

We made corrections to that one. We spent over half-a-million dollars on those peer reviews in order to bring in experts that had not been involved with EPA, had not been involved with General Electric Company.

We brought people in from all over the world.

So, where has all of this led us? Well, while we knew that there was an unacceptable situation, the answer was not simple.

And to try and explain this to people, it is not a cookie-cutter solution.

We used a variety of tools. We used our sampling, the State's sampling and GE's own sampling of the water column we looked at.

We looked at the sediment levels. We tried to clarify with the State what was happening with the fish levels on fish data that had been collected to understand what was actually happening to the fish.

We also synthesized all of this into a very complex mathematical model.

We used this model to try to predict, as best we could, what would happen if you did certain things.

As I said, you start turning different dials and understanding how the river responds as you turn those dials.

We did all that, and we think we came up with a very sensible, practical and common sense approach.

And I would like to go into that remedy and explain to you a little bit.

Now, the first slides that have been up here since you walked in shows the three sections of the River.

The 40-mile stretch of the River here is what we call the Upper Hudson.

The first section is six miles long and is the most contaminated.

And when I say "the first", that is Section One.

The northernmost section is six miles long. It is the area, basically, between Roger's Island, Fort Edward, and the Thompson Island Dam.

In that area, fish are highly

contaminated; most contaminated.

In fact, most of the contaminated sediment that we are dealing with is in that first stretch.

The second stretch we looked at was between the Thompson Island Dam and the Northumberland Dam, a stretch of around five miles, wherein we also found fish contamination that was very significant.

We also found surprisingly high levels of PCBs as far as the sheer mass of PCBs that were present within that pool.

The third section is the longest section; it is a 29-mile stretch that goes from the Northumberland Dam down through the Federal Dam in Troy.

And there, there was not much contaminatd sediment, but the contaminated sediment we did find in some places in certain areas showed clear marks that erosion either had occurred or would occur. So, we looked at that section as well.

And as we looked at those three sections, we tried to come up with -- we customized a remedy, if you will; we did

certain things in the top section in order to impact fish, basically to try to bring fish tissue levels down.

We did things in the second section, also, to -- we did things in the second section, really, to start to look at -- we looked at fish levels as well as the mass of PCBs and the transported PCBs, as well, downriver.

In the third section, that last section, there really was not that much of an impact on fish.

We looked at the PCBs, and we looked at hot spots.

We found one hot spot, actually, where 70 percent of the mass had moved in the last 20 years.

So, we looked there. We looked for areas that seemed to be unstable and tried to figure out a process to get them out of the river.

We custom-tailored a remedy, and we came up with a remedy called "Targeted Dredging", a very measured response to the problem we have.

This is the preferred alternative that we have.

When we say "targeted", they say, "Well, how can you target something that is 2-1/2 billion cubic yards, when the river is 35 miles long in this area and has an immense amount of sediment in it?", as you obviously would imagine.

The acreage within that area is roughly 3900 acres.

And as I will show you on the following slides -- which I am not ready to go with yet -- of that 3900 acres, we are actually impacting less than 500 of them, less than 13 percent of the surface area.

That is pretty targeted. We could have certainly targeted a greater area.

We looked for the benefit. We looked at the benefits, and we looked at the issues. We said, "Well, how do you..." -- we wanted to minimize dysfunction, certainly, and we wanted to maximize improvements.

We came up with a rationale that did that.

We lowered the fish concentrations.

We lowered the risk of movement of the PCBs, and we lowered the level of PCBs that would go over the Troy Dam by approximately 40 percent into the downriver area.

The remedy we came up with was 2.65 cubic million yards of sediment removal, over 100,000 pounds of PCBs; roughly half the PCBs in the Upper Hudson River is what we are talking about removing.

The other half are diffused in other locations or in stable locations where we felt it was unnecessary to remove them.

It costs around $460 million. And that is impressive work. That means we have to invest $460 million now in order to have enough money to pay for the construction when you actually construct -- begin construction of this job in three-and-a-half years.

We came up with no local landfill. There was serious objection to it.

We felt that it was probably administratively impossible, as well as highly unacceptable to local communities.

So, we removed -- there is no local landfill.

All of the material here will be dewatered near the river on a temporary basis and removed off site out of the Hudson Valley to landfills -- to licensed landfills in other parts of the United States.

During removal, the river will be open to navigation.

There had been claims that we were going to close the river during navigation, that the river would not be useable.

The river will be useable. In fact, of the 2.65 million cubic yards, over 300,000 of those cubic yards -- actually, 341,000 is our estimate, if you want to be exact -- is actually going to be removed by dredging.

We are going to transport material by barge via the Upper Hudson River harbor.

We have to have channels available to those barges, so we have to reopen some of the channels that have been closed for years or have had problems for years.

At the same time, we want people to be able to get around it while we are working.

So, what we have now, there are channels we are going to widen, and we are

going to have new channels so that the river will remain navigable while we are doing the work, and navigation may very well improve.

As to dewatering facilities, there will be two of them.

They will probably cover around 15 acres each.

There will be water on the north end and water on the sound end, in all likelihood, and they will be on commercial properties.

We are not talking about setting these things on farmland or unspoiled property.

These would be located on existing industrial/commercial facility areas.

We are going to move this material by rail.

We are not going to move the material by truck. There will not be a lot of trucks clogging the area.

We expect to be able to -- one of the criteria as we site these facilities is that we have rail transport for those locations.

Well, people say you cannot do it in five years.

We believe you absolutely can do it

in five years.

It is a matter of a scale. People say, "Well, we never did anything this big. We never had a site this big. We never had 300 miles of river that has contamination in 40 miles that we are dealing with now."

We have a much larger site than we have ever had, so, obviously, the numbers are larger.

We will scale up what we have done before.

And we have gone to the experts. We have gone to the Army Corps of Engineers. We have gone to dredging experts, as far as contractors.

They assure us that we can do it.

We are going to use environmental dredging techniques.

We are not going to be going there and just upset the river and interrupt traffic and material all over the river area.

First of all, everything we do will be monitored.

If we have any releases, any significant releases from the areas where we

are working, we will shut the site down.

We are not looking to ruin the river or in any way increase pollution of the river. This will only decrease pollution in the river even on a short-term basis, if you look at a season-by-season basis.

The dredges will have -- they can use clamshells. They will have sensors. They will open and close the clamshells. As to being half-open, I do not know if that will be able to happen.

There are video cameras mounted on these things as well, if we use them.

So, when people ask, "When do you use hydraulic dredges versus mechanical dredges?", we do not really know.

We are going to custom tailor this. We have got a three-year design period planned into this thing.

And assuming that we finalize this decision in June, then that goes into a three-year design period during which time we will try to get all the details down pat.

We have spoken to people about this, you may be sure, and it may very well be a

combination of things.

You know, there is a time and place for everything.

We have different places where the decision may be to use a clamshell; different places where you use a hydraulic dredge.

And I would just like to show three slides, if I may, before we go further.

(Slide presentation.)

MR. CASPE: This is the Hudson River.

If you look in the upper left, that is the Fort Edward Dam up there.

And if you move down on the lefthand side near the bottom, you will see Thompson Island Dam.

That is the first section. That is the Thompson Island Pool which is the most contaminated part.

The red designates the area we are going to dredge and the blue or white, depending on where you are sitting or how you are seeing it, is where we are not going to dredge.

So, you see there is a lot of activity actually there in the first section,

And that Thompson Island Pool is 1-1/2 million of the 2-1/2 million cubic gallons that are to be treated because it is the most contaminated area.

That is where we get the greatest benefit, as well.

If you look at the second area from basically the lefthand side, the righthand side of that slide you see becomes much less; that's five miles moving on down to the Northumberland Dam.

And you see there is much less width; very limited dredging.

Now, the next two slides show the next 29 miles of the river. Look at how much red there is in that 29 miles of river.

And, remember, whenevever you look at those and you see slivers, you see little thin rectangles running down around the length of the river, that is navigational dredging; that is not even dredging for a hot spot.

That is dredging so you can move barges back and forth.

So, that is it. I have probably run over my time.

I would like to turn it over now to Doug, who is going to talk about the reasons why.

We are going to go into a little detail on the reasons for remediation.

(Applause.)

MR. TOMCHUK: Good evening. We are going to talk about why we believe active remediation is necessary.

And Alison will be following me, and she will be talking about the process that we used to determine which active remediation might be used.

(Slide presentation.)

MR. TOMCHUK: As to the first slide, when we take a look at this, one of the first things that we studied was the transport of PCBs in the water column.

And we found out that PCBs were primarily transported in the form of sediment in the Hudson River all the way from the freshwater Hudson all the way down to Kingston, over 100 river miles.

What we found was that the PCBs, as they crossed the Thompson Island Pool -- that

is that River Section 1 that Rich showed you on the map, a six-mile reach of the river -- that they come in at a level that is fairly low but go out with a lot more PCBs in them.

So, there is a lot of increase in the PCBs that would cross that part of the pool.

That increase of PCBs comes from the sediment, and it is equivalent to about one- to one-and-a-half pounds of PCBs per day.

Next slide. This graphic shows you in the yellow the approximate concentration coming into the upstream boundary, and the blue is the concentration that leaves.

You can see that there is a large increase.

You can see that there is a change in the bottom. The bottom is PCB homologs. The site is the mass in pounds per day.

And you see the overall increase. And you add all those rows together, that is how many pounds per day.

But you also see a change in the pattern of PCBs, and that is how we identified that it would be coming from the sediments and not any other source.

But there are no other real sources than the sediment in this area, and it has to be coming from the sediment.

So, PCBs do come from the sediment and contribute to the water.

What processes naturally might solve this problem?

We investigated two of these thoroughly.

The first thing that we considered was PCB dechlorination.

We found that PCB inventories will not be naturally remediated by dechlorination.

Dechlorination is where the chlorine atom on the PCB atom will be stripped off by organisms in the sediment.

This does occur. This is one of the reasons we can do the fingerprinting that we saw from the previous slide.

What we found was that only 10 percent of the base of the PCBs would be lost through this process.

And the big thing here is that this is controlled by concentration and not time.

It is not just thatwe need, another

10 or 20years before the river will get better from dechlorination. It is just not going to happen because the concentrations -- because it is not just a matter of time.

It occurs quickly when it does occur, but it becomes only negligible when viewing the entire picture.

The other possibility as to natural processes to deplete the PCB load to the water column and to the fish is burial of PCBs.

But we have found that the Upper Hudson River is a dynamic area with fish, and natural sedimentation will not cure the PCB problem.

Clean sediments come in from runoff from the surrounding area and we do see burial at some locations, but we are still finding high concentrations near the surface.

We found some quarters that had PCB concentrations as high as 600 parts per million at the sediment surface, a very high concentration.

We also found that 50 percent of the low-resolution cores that we took in 1994, that the maximum level was within the top nine

inches, and that shows that we are not getting the depth of burial that would isolate the material.

The big thing here is that we still have PCBs in many locations that are available to the fish.

This is a graphic of Brown Bullhead concentrations in the Thompson Island Pool.

And basically this is lipid-normalized; that is, it is normalized by the fat content of the fish.

We see that from 1986 to 1999, the concentrations have gone down over time.

But the key thing that we find from this is that, in the last five years, the concentration has not gone down at all; it has basically remained level.

This is key because these processes have slowed down or are mutable at this time.

Another key finding here is that the PCB concentrations are still exceeding acceptable levels.

Our goal is 0.05 parts per million. As we see here, we have concentrations in a large amount of Bass and Brown Bullhead in

levels that exceed that by many times.

We did risk assessments, and we studied several exposure pathways.

The predominant pathway of exposure here, the primary pathway that we are concerned with, is consumption of fish.

And we found that both human and environmental risks exceed acceptable levels.

The cancer risk is a thousand times the goal that EPA uses for protection.

We also found that there are non-cancer hazards over a hundred times the acceptable level for a young child, and that is 65 times the level for an adult, non-cancer health effects, such as low birth rate, immune problems and immune deficiencies, inability to fight infections.

We also did ecological birth assessments on the river otter, mink and bald eagle.

And, for example, with the fish-eating mammals and birds, higher levels of the food chain, there were unacceptable levels.

We put all this together and we found that the natural processes were not doing it

and we have currently unacceptable levels.

So, we felt that active remediation was necessary.

And, at this point, we will turn it over to the next part of the study, the Feasibility Study, which has just be released.

And Alison will explain this.

(Applause.)

MS. HESS: Thank you. There are some seats available in the front, if you would like to make yourself comfortable.

What I am going to do now is show you the process that EPA used to arrive at its preferred alternative.

The purpose of the Feasability Study is to evaluate options to addres the PCB contaminated sediments in the Upper Hudson River to protect human health and the environment.

The objectives of our study included goals for fish.

In fish, we want to reduce the cancer risks and non-cancer health hazards for people eating fish by reducing the concentrations of PCBs in the fish.

And, similarly, we want to reduce the risk to ecologicl receptors -- for example, the fish-eating birds and mammals -- by reducing the concentration of PCBs in fish.

We would want to reduce the concentration of PCBs in the river water that are above environmental standards.

And we also wanted to minimize the downstream transport of PCBs,the transport of PCBs from over the Federal Dam, from the Upper Hudson to the Lower Hudson.

For the sediment, we want to reduce the PCBs in sediments that are or may be bioavailable and, thereby, move up through the food chain.

In order to accomplish these goals, we considered a number of different types of action.

We considered three types of action, including no action, monitoring natural attenuation -- which are the naturally-occurring processes including dechlorination and burial -- and institutional controls, such as the fish consumption advisories that are currently in place and the fishing restrictions

like the catch-and-release program in place in the Upper Hudson River.

We also included active alternatives, such as containment or capping and removal or environmental dredging with the various treatment technologies.

In situ treatment technologies are treatments that would treat the PCBs in the river, and we did not find any technologies that were capable of doing this in the Upper Hudson River.

We also looked at ex situ treatment technologies where we remove the sediments from the river and then treat them.

We looked at beneficial use options. These are options where we retrieve the sediment and turn it into some commercially-viable product, such as architectural tiles or cement.

We looked at different modes of transportation, and we looked at different disposal options.

And we evaluated all of our alternatives using the Standard Nine Criteria for Superfund Sites.

The two most important criteria are called "threshhold factors".

These are overall protection of human health and the environment and compliance with other environmental laws.

Next, there are five primary balancing criteria and the various modifying criteria, one of which is community acceptance.

And as part of that process, we are here tonight to accept public comment.

The no-action alternative includes no institutional controls, such as the fish consumption advisories and the fishing restrictions, and also no reduction of the upstream source near the GE Hudson Falls Plant, where PCBs continually enter into the river.

EPA did not select this as its preferred alternative because it is not protective of human health and the environment.

We considered monitored natural attenuation -- again, the naturally-occurring processes in the river.

Under this category, we include institutional controls such as fish consumption

advisories and the fishing restriction and monitoring of the fish, sediment, water and air.

And, also, this alternative assumes the benefits that would be obtained from the separate upstream source control near the GE Hudson Falls plant.

The cost for this alternative is $39 million in year 2000 for the upstream controls.

The EPA did not identify this alternative as preferred because it was not adequately protective of human health and the environment.

We found that the river is not cleaning itself up on its own. And in order to reach that determination, we used not only our computer modeling but also the data we have obtained and others have obtained from the river and especially the fish data.

We found that the monitored natural attenuation is also responsive to ecological receptors.

We considered capping. This would be an alternative where we place an ecological cap in all areas except the navigational channels.

But we wanted to minimize any natural disruptions. So, in order to place a cap in these locations, we would have to first remove sediment.

This meant that substantial dredging would be required in order to place the cap and also to allow the normal flow of river traffic.

This alternative includes monitored natural attenuation until acceptable levels are reached and also assumes significant source control near the GE Hudson Falls Plant.

The cost for this alternative is $370 million.

The EPA did not select this as its preferred alternative because it is not a sufficiently permanent remedy; over the long term, the permanence of the cap is uncertain.

This alternative also has challenges posed by both dredging and capping, and we would essentially need to maintain the cap forever.

We looked at dredging alternatives. As Rich mentioned, we looked at both mechanical and hydraulic, environmental dredging equipment, and found that both had

possibilities for use in the Upper Hudson if they were equipped with appropriate controls to eliminate re-suspension.

For the two dredging alternatives that we looked at, we wanted to complete them in about five years using multiple dredges.

This would also use additional dredging in the channels in order to implement alternatives to move our barges and also to allow the normal flow of river traffic.

This alternative includes monitored natural attentuation until acceptable levels are attained and also assumes source control near, the GE Hudson Falls Plant.

The dredging alternatives offer permanent removal of the PCB-contaminated sediments which reduce the concentration in fish and are protective of human health and the environment.

This slide shows the comparison of the two dredging alternatives we considered.

The first one is the one that EPA selected as its preferred alternative.

And, as you see, about 493 acres would be remediated, compared to the more

expensive dredging where almost 1,000 acres would be remediated.

Our preferred alternative has a volume of sediment removed of about 2.65 million cubic yards, compared to the more expensive alternative of 3.8 million cubic yards.

The preferred alternative would be at a cost of $460 milion as opposed to the more expensive alternative of $570 million.

Again, taking a look at the preferred alternative, we would use environmental dredging techniques to minimize any adverse effect to the environment.

The material dredged would be stabilized at a temporary facility and then transported by rail to an off-site landfill; no new or existing landfill within the Hudson Valley would be used.

This alternative also includes institutional controls such as the fishing restriction and advisories, and we believe that the institutional controls could be relaxed as the conditions of the river improve.

For example, a person eating one fish

per meal -- one fish meal every two months would be at safe levels from 20 to 40 years earlier than under no action.

And one fish meal per month could be reached at 25 to 30 years earlier under this alternative.

And, certainly, this would be faster in the third river section, the last 29 miles of the Upper Hudson River.

We would also meet our target concentration of 0.05 parts per million in fish within that third river section in the last 29 miles.

We would have monitored natural attenuation until, with the residual PCBs, until the acceptable levels are reached.

And this alternative assumes source control at the GE Hudson Falls site.

The aspects of this alternative are in direct response to many concerns that we have heard already: There is no local landfill; we would accommodate the normal flow of river traffic; and we would complete the project in five years using multiple dredges, and we would be in any one location for a short

period of time.

EPA selected this as its preferred alternative because it would reduce the concentrationa in fish so that the eating advisory for the Upper Hudson River at least would be relaxed one generation earlier and would create safer conditions for those who do not folow the consumption advisories.

It also reduces the risk to fish-eating birds and mammals and will reduce the PCB load going over the Federal Dam by 40 percent.

The preferred alternative was selected because it is protective of human health and the environment, it is permanent, and it is cost effective.

Thank you.

(Applause.)

MR. CASPE: We would first like to call Richard Salter. He is representing Congressman Don Gilman.

MR. SALTER: The Congressman planned on being here this evening.

Unfortunately, he was called away to do the business of government.

I want to thank the EPA on behalf of the Congressman for the excellent presentation it made here this evening, and thank all of you folks for coming out here this evening and for giving an attentive ear to listening to our major concerns.

I wanted to keep it real short. Thank you very much.

MR. CASPE: Catherine Hudson, representing Attorney General Catherine Spitzer?

(Applause.)

MS. HUDSON: Thank you. My name is Catherine Hudson. I am Assistant Attorney General with the Environmental Protection Bureau.

We appreciate the opportunity to present this statement on behalf of the Office of the Attorney General.

The Attorney General's Office strongly supports the Environmental Protection Agency's decision to dredge sediments in the most contaminated areas of the Hudson River.

Fish throughout the Hudson River, from Hudson Falls to the Battery, are

contaminated with PCBs. Wildlife is contaminated.

Humans are exposed and are also contaminated with PCBs.

It is time to address that problem. We applaud EPA Administrator Carol Browner and the staff of EPA Region 2 for the care and thoroughness they exhibited in reaching this conclusion.

And we applaud DEC Commissioner John Cahill and his staff for the time and effort that they have expended in studying the river and reviewing EPA's proposal.

Congress made a decision 20 years ago and has repeatedly reaffirmed it since then that there is a compelling need to clean up toxic waste sites.

Companies responsible for contaminants must clean them up preferably by removing them.

(Applause.)

MS. HUDSON: The Hudson River, after a decade of study, is long overdue for such a clean-up.

(Applause.)

MS. HUDSON: Based on the evidence of the record and EPA's and the State's technical and scientific review of the evidence, four points are clear and should be indisputable.

One: PCBs cause harm to humans and wildlife. That harm includes immune, reproductive, nervous and endocrine system injury, as well as cancer.

Two: PCBs in the river sediments are available to fish and other animals and from there can be ingested by humans.

We know that people are still eating contaminated fish from the Hudson River.

Three: The river is not cleaning itself of PCBs.

While the river is cleaner now than it was 30 years ago, that is largely because the State has expended tremendous resources to reduce sewage and other industrial discharges.

The PCBs that remain in the river are visible. The PCB levels in the fish have only decreased marginally in the over 20 years since GE stopped using PCBs at its Hudson Falls and Fort Edward plants.

Over the last seven years, they have

remained essentially stable.

Unless PCBs are removed from the river, the fish will remain contaminated.

Four: Dredging the hot spots in the river will remove large quantities of PCBs and, in conjunction with controlling the continuing discharges from the Hudson Falls Plant, will lead to major improvements in the river.

This remedy will dramatically decrease human health risks particularly in the Upper Valley.

It will also cut almost in half the flow of PCBs over the Troy Dam, significantly assisting the recovery of the Lower Hudson River.

These long-term benefits far outweigh the limited short-term impacts that may result.

In addition, we believe that, under existing law, it is fair and legal to require GE to clean up their toxic discharges under the Federal Superfund Program and its State equivalents, whether illegally discharged or not.

There is no reason to treat GE differently. In any event, GE's discharges

were not contrary to the common misperception to taxpayers who will have to pay for the clean-up if GE does not.

To those towns and industries who have done their share to clean the river and to New Yorkers who long for a cleaner Hudson River, fairness, to me, means that GE removes its toxic tastes from the river.

We save the river by cleaning it, not by leaving it polluted.

Thank you.

(Applause.)

MR. CASPE: I would also like to just acknowledge that we also received a statement from New York State Assemblyman John Fasso, which we will enter into the record.

Okay. It is your turn now. Again, pay attention to Karen. She is an ex-crossing guard. She is going to be holding up the green and yellow and red signs.

The yellow sign means 30 seconds and the red shows stop.

We have 75 people who have filled out cards to speak. At two minutes even, that is 150 minutes, which is close to three hours;

two-and-a-half hours, anyway.

And that does not include the break that we have to take at some point.

So, it is going to be a long time. Let us try and keep it to two minutes each so that everyone may have an opportunity to speak and get home at a relatively reasonable hour.

I am going to call people five at a time to the microphones. Then, after those people speak, I will call the next group of five.

This way, perhaps, we can keep people moving and it will not get too crazy here.

So, let us start. The first speaker is going to be Sonja Peters; then Dave Keegan, Robert Robinson, Congressman Joe Reeling, then Robert Hanson.

If you ask me why this order, I have no idea. That is the order I got the cards in.

Sonja Peters?

MS. PETERS: Hello. My name is Sonja Peters. I am 10 years old, and I just wanted to say that I would really like the river to be cleaned up because then I could swirm in it and not be scared that PCBs will be getting into

my bloodstream and maybe even into my friends and family.

(Applause.)

MR. CASPE: Thank you, Sonja.

Robert Robinson?

MR. ROBINSON: I am Robert Robinson. On my way to this meeting tonight, I was privileged to hear another ad by GE stating their 20-year, not-in-my-back yard policy.

Well, it has been over 20 years now since that river has been poisoned.

If I understand this project, it would take five years of actual dredging, and it will not be in any one area for more than one season, more or less.

The ad goes on saying that we, the people, do not get a vote or can have our voices heard.

If we had no voice, then how did I show up here today and make these comments?

GE, clean our river. Do it for your grandchildren's environment, not their inheritance.

(Applause.)

COUNCILMAN RUGGIERO: I am Joe

Ruggiero from the Town of Wappingers.

I live on the Hudson River in Dutchess County. And I think EPA's decision to go ahead and dredge is long overdue and sorely welcomed.

And we really appreciate your going forward in this process.

I have been very frustrated and disconcerted by the disingenuous advertising campaign put forward by General Electric.

And I think what we need to do is get your facts out there, not GE's facts, and I think more people would be very supportive of the project, as I am.

And I hope we can get more elected officials in Dutches County to come forward to support this project.

Thank you.

(Applause.)

MR. REAGAN: My name is Paul Reagan, and I come from Rhinebeck.

I believe the clean-up campaign is very, very important here in Poughkeepsie, as it is in Fort Edward.

But I also believe that the best

layed plans of mice and men can some times go afoul and that unintended consequences are sometimes ill-planned but take place.

This plan constantly needs to be reviewed. I would hope that this project would be as careful as the Marshal Plan was after World War II.

In my estimation, this is the biggest earth-moving operation next to the Great Glacier from 12,000 years ago.

You have our lives and you have our legacy at stake.

We hope that, with all the goodwill that we hear tonight, that you will be as careful when it commences as you have been in your studies because every step you take is one where there could be great insult in one way or another to Mother Nature.

Thank you for listening.

I represent PANDA, "Public Access, Northern Dutchess Area". We are a small public access station in Rhinebeck, serving Rhinebeck, Red Hook and Tivoli. We are almost the news. Thank you very much.

(Applause.)

MR. HINES: I am Eric Hines, President and Chief Executive Officer of Geovision Technologies. We are based in Orange County.

I would like to make a couple of technical statements for EPA and its consultants.

And I would like to qualify my statements by saying that I have not had the opportunity to review the Feasibility Study.

So, please, do not be insulted if I bring up something that you already looked at.

First, as to the Feasibility Study terminology, I would like to call attention to two process categories which I am not certain have been evaluated thoroughly.

The first is anaerobic bioremediation in situ or ex situ.

An example of anaerobic bioremediation -- we call it "biogeochemics" and, as its name implies, it involves the biochemical degradation of PCBs.

We have done extensive work on DDT in situ and ex situ.

This approach may have similar efects

to dredging or dechlorination.

In any event, we believe it deserves consideration as a better means than simply land disposal.

Thank you for your time.

MR. CASPE: Andy Melle?

MR. MELLE: I am Andy Melle. I am going to resist temptation tonight and not do any GE-bashing. How is that for restraint?

Instead, I am going to talk about myself. I am going to talk about -- and forgive me to all of those of you who have already heard this -- talk about the fact that, a few years ago, I had my own blood tested.

And I have 0.2 parts per million PCBs in my body, which is more than the PCBs coming out of the river. And I have not even eaten a Hudson River fish in, like, 15 years.

So, my guess is that I got that just from living along the face of the river.

So, I am here tonight to say that I would really like to see the PCBs removed.

That is just my personal point of view.

I am also representing Clearwater.

At 0.2 parts per million, I would not be safe to eat.

On behalf of my organization, however, I wanted to express its deep and heartfelt thanks to the EPA for the work that it has done; the unbelievable amount of paperwork that has just assaulted you every day.

You have been magnificent. You have answered many questions.

I want to express, also, our thanks for the support of Attorney General Eliot Spencer's office for its support and information; you heard from Cathy Hudson.

I would like to thank you on behalf of Clearwater, and I would like to thank the Governor.

The Governor chimed in on this issue and made his position known and put his public comment on the record.

When you went over the crieria for making this decision, one of them was participation at the state level. And without the Governor's support, we would be having a real hard time making this happen.

I would also like to thank the many members of the DEC -- I will stop. Okay.

(Applause.)

MR. KYRIACO: I am Lee Kyriaco. I am a former city Councilman, Beacon, six years. It is a community on the Hudson River.

I recently ran for State Aseembly to represent several communities.

I have been a senior vice-president at Fleet Bank, where I have been the Director of Planning, and laso a senior vice-president at Chase Manhattan Bank before that.

I have no particular predisposition to penalize corporations arbitrarily. Those are the things I am.

What I am not is a scientist, an expert in this field or, certainly, a full reader of all the materials that have been developed here.

So, how do I or any layperson really assess all that is going on here?

I guess it comes down to reliance on the scientists; that we should ensure impartiality and ensure local input.

In my view, the EPA has done just

that. They have provided exceptionally thorough science. It has been extensive.

It has been through extensive -- it has been years and years; maybe too long -- peer review; that means impartial, disinterested experts when dealing with a process.

That should convey impartiality, and it does so. And it has also been reflective of local concerns.

If the EPA has done a good job, then why is there any public hullaballo whatsoever?

Well, that is pretty simple. That is because there is one party -- and only one -- that has a direct financial interest in the outcome, and that is GE, because they will have to pay for it.

And I just wanted to note that for the record that that clouds every single statement by GE in court, in science, in all their public statements --

(Applause.

MR. KYRIACO: To understand fully GE's financial liability, one could imagine what the debate over the last 20 years might

have been; I think we would have dredged long, long before this.

And that tells you what to think about their statements and what to think about what the EPA has done.

I just wanted to thank the EPA for its hard work. I trust the EPA, and I hope the public does, as well.

(Applause.)

MR. ELLIOT: Robert Elliot, Mayor of Croton-on-Hudson.

On behalf of our residents, I want to thank the Environmental Protection Agency for its presentation this evening.

On behalf of our residents, I want to congratulate you on your findings.

You have our community's full support in your recommendations.

I think it might also be helpful to note that our community has experience in PCB clean-up.

Not too many years ago, we removed 18-1/2 million pounds of PCB-laden material from our community which was leaching into the Hudson River.

That clean-up had no negative effect whatsoever on our community.

And, in fact, it only had a positive impact, not the least of which was an increase in property values.

Our economy in the Hudson Valley requires follow-through on your recommendations; everything from the clean-up of New York City's Harbor maintained as a class harbor to tourism requires your recommendations to be implemented.

As many know, tourism is a major industry in this Valley and, until we remove the stigma of a contaminated river, it will not flourish as it should.

And as to the health risks, I cannot top Andy's story, but I can speak directly to it.

Along the shores of our community and neighboring communities, we have many subsistance fishermen who put their own health and their families' health regularly at risk by consuming fish in their homes.

And, again, I would like to thank the EPA, and we look forward to the implementation

of your proposal.

MS. LALUND: My name is Lisa Michelle Lalund. I actually was not quite sure which one to go with.

I was at the meeting on Tuesday. I think the responses here are a lot more in your favor.

When I was there, I did receive information pro-dredging and I heard a lot of earth-throwing from the other side.

I did not perceive that there was any sort of scientific research that stated it was harmful to dredge the Hudson.

So, I thought that I needed a little more information and, when I went to try to find that, I could not.

I went to GE's statement to see if -- I figured if there was any information, it was going to be there.

And what I did read was a lot of inflammatory remarks but no documented findings that supported their position.

I did find it interesting that they stated they had spent almost $200 million over the past 20 years to clean up the Hudson.

Of course, a lot of that was spent on the propaganda over the 50 communities that they now say do not support the dredging.

But I feel that it is a strong point. $200 million over 20 years. The EPA is recommending a project that would cost them $460 million over five years. That comparison, I think, shows that this kind of goes against GE's attitude concerning spending money. It has nothing to do with the people and the wildlife.

If GE was truly interested in the ecology, they would never have done the toxic waste dumping to begin with.

To the people of the Hudson Valley: Do not let GE's propaganda cause you to doubt. Do not let them brainwash you into thinking that the EPA is their oppressor.

And, above all, do not look to GE not to protect their bottom line.

(Applause.)

MS. LALUND: The EPA has nothing to gain or lose in this decision.

Their suggestions are based solely on facts.

As a resident of the Hudson Valley, I urge you, however, as opposed to the dredging, to research --

MR. CASPE: Lisa, please, the red sign is looking at you.

MS. LALUND: I am sorry. I was not even looking at you.

MR. CASPE: The next speaker is Denise Ann Ackman.

(No response.)

MR. CASPE: Colette Lafuente?

MS. LAFUENTE: Thank you. I am Mayor and a Member of the Planning Board of the City of Poughkeepsie.

And 70,000 people are served by that water and, hopefully, more will be served by the time the dredging has been completed.

My concern is that, when the releases are done, that there be adequate notification to all water plants that are taking water out of the Hudson at that time because we have in the City of Poughkeepsie only half-a-day's storage capacity and then, in Town, there is about a day's storage capacity.

So, we would like this notice so that

we could be able to deal with it as best we could.

And if a release occurs, I hope that you have got some kind of a way -- how long before work would stop; how long it would stop; how you deal with the releases; and just this notification system.

And, hopefully, there will be some way for the water plants to remedy the situation that could occur if PCBs are in there.

We have no PCBs in our water at this time, nor have we had any PCBs in the sludge from our water.

Thank you very much.

(Applause.)

MR. CASPE: We will certainly deal with those issues during design.

But at this stage of the game, we plan on no releases.

And we certainly would have environmental modeling or equipment in place so that, should something start going awry, we would shut the site down before it got out of hand.

But we will certainly work those details out as we go forward.

The next speaker is Cara Lee.

MS. LEE: Hello. My name is Cara Lee, C-a-r-a L-e-e, and I am up here on behalf of Scenic Hudson.

First of all, I want to thank EPA for coming to Poughkeepsie.

It is important that you make your presentations here in the areas of the Lower Hudson and New York City.

We look forward to more of these presentations.

This plan has been a very, very long time in coming, and we commend the EPA in finally getting the plan out in the face of many different odds.

Last week, Carol Browner reminded us of the sobering fact that we still live along the most contaminated river in the country.

We have lived with PCBs in the Hudson Valley for decades.

And with this plan, we have a renewed sense of urgency, and we believe it is time to get this clean-up going.

Scenic Hudson supports the proposed plan because it calls for removal of the most contaminated sediments in the Upper Hudson River.

And we support the EPA's plan to dispose of the sediments outside the Hudson Valley because we believe it will help neutralize opposition in the Upper Hudson Valley.

Despite GE's claims to the contrary, the Hudson River is simply not cleaning itself up, and EPA has done a very good job in demonstrating the facts as to why this is not the case.

Dredging is necessary and can be done effectively and safely.

General Electric is very actively promoting the notion that the clean-up will be damaging to the Hudson River and devastating to Upper Hudson River Valley communities.

We are firmly convinced of the long-term benefits to the river and to our communities, both in terms of public health and the economy.

Those benefits far, far outweigh the

limited impacts of dredging.

This remedy proposes removing about half of the remaining PCBs from the Upper Hudson River.

We believe we will be supporting a more aggressive removal plan to further accelerate the recovery of the Hudson.

And we hope that people recognize that EPA has proposed this as their preferred remedy, but they have also outlined more aggressive plans.

And we will be submitting more comments during the comment period.

Thank you.

(Applause.)

MR. CASPE: Doris Tidin -- or, T-i-d-d-i-n?

(No response.)

MR. CASPE: Let me read the next five.

(Reciting names of next five registered speakers.)

MR. PARSON: I am Gerard Randers Parson. I will give you a printed card with my name; it is hard to spell.

GE's position on PCB toxicity is that there is no credible evidence that PCB exposure causes disease in people. That is incorrect.

Please refer to the mortality study by Dr. Tim Brown published in March of '99, as to all hourly and salaried workers employed where PCBs were factors in the Hudson, with the workers divided into males and females, usually four groups per study.

From the newspaper clip, the purpose of the study was to further explore previously reported instances of cancers and mortality compared to workers exposed to PCBs.

The study showed liver, rectum, gastrointestinal and other cancers increased upon exposure to PCBs.

The hourly female group had a standard mortality rate of significantly greater than 100 percent.

In those groups, there were 28 cases of cancer when only 18 were expected.

This yields an SMR of 156 with a 95 percent constant interval of 103 to 225.

These data from Kimbro require that PCB be reclassified as a known human

carcinogen.

If we group together the cancers of the upper digestive tract, we find an elevation in cancer for both hourly worker groups.

For males, the SMR of 154 is not significant. However, in the female group, we find seven deaths when only 2.8 were expected.

Obviously, this indicates a significant elevation of cancer.

We can only use these results as a guide for future studies because future studies of these groups should include all digestive tract cancers. Thank you.

MR. CASPE: The next speaker is Councilman Steven Gold.

(No response.)

MR. CASPE: Peter Rostenberg?

MR. ROSTENBERG: Peter Rostenberg, R-o-s-t-e-n-b-e-r-g.

I am representing the Fisher Ridge Caretakers. I am a practicing fisherman, and I came to talk about the adverse health effects of PCBs.

But I would like to thank Carol Browner and the wonderful staff of Region 2,

EPA, for doing world-class research, peer-review research.

It just does not come any better than that.

There is no question about this chemical being dangerous.

Just last week in Johannesburg, a group of 122 nations outlawed what are called "The Dirty Dozen". And PCB is one of those chemicals that would be outlawed throughout the world by 2004.

I would also like to tell you, as you probably already know, that GE, our adversary, is a very advanced company.

What kind of company would defend keeping one of the most dangerous chemicals in our river?

Well, the fact is that this company has committed multiple repeated felonious acts.

For example --

A PERSON: Tell it like it is.

MR. ROSTENBERG: In 1990, they were convicted of cheating the Army on a contract for battlefield computers.

Again, they cheated the Navy for

overcharging on guided missile frigates, and they pleaded guilty to 180 charges for making false claims to the Air Force on Minuteman Intercontinental Missiles.

If they would do that to our military people, what do you think they would do to you?

Thank you.

(Applause.)

MR. CASPE: The next speaker is Alex Matthiessen.

MR. MATTHIESSEN: My name is Alex Matthiessen. I am Executive Director of a group called "The Riverkeeper" --

(Applause.)

MR. MATTHIESSEN: Riverkeeper represents fishermen and other users of the river, and represents thousands of constituents that care very much and deeply about their river.

Riverkeeper, along with Scenic Hudson and Clearwater, are responsible largely for raising the consciousness levels about the condition of the river over the last 30 years.

However, PCBs remain an obstacle

* * *

to a fully restored cleaning up of this world-class estuary.

And until we clean up this river, remove the PCBs from this river, we are not going to be able to protect human health; we are not going to be able to restore the commercial fisheries.

A fishery that was 300 years old had to shut down overnight because of PCBs caused by General Electric.

On behalf of Riverkeeper, I want to applaud the EPA.

This has been an exhaustive and science-based analysis that has been conducted over 10 years.

And it is of first-rate quality, and we very much appreciate your efforts.

We support active environmental remediation in the form of suction dredging.

The only thing I would ask is that you find a way to expedite this design phase.

I think that three years is two years too long, given what GE has done over the last 25 years to delay this.

I think the three years is too long

for us to wait for the clean-up to begin.

I recognize and I am sensitive to the fact that you need to prepare carefully in figuring out how you are going to implement this clean-up.

But I would strongly encourage you to try to do this in a year or year-and-a-half, as opposed to three years.

We do not want to give GE all that time to file numerous lawsuits and spend $100 million on false PR campaigns.

(Applause.)

MR. MATTHIESSEN: Just to wrap up and conclude, I would just like to state that GE is clearly responsible for this pollution.

PCBs are a proven health hazard. And the bottom line is that GE can easily afford this clean-up and has a responsibility under the law to do so.

Riverkeeper will support EPA to the end on this, and we just hope that you remain strong despite who comes into office next month.

(Applause.)

MR. CASPE: The next speaker is Richard Dennison.

MR. DENNISON: My name is Richard Dennison.

I think everything has been said that I was going to say anyway.

So, I will give my time to another speaker. But I would like to thank EPA for its commitment and involvement in this issue.

MR. CASPE: (Reciting names of next five registered speakers.)

The next speaker is Gregory Bell.

MR. BELL: My name is Gregory Bell, B-e-l-l.

I have lived in the Hudson Valley for about 30 years in two different cities.

And I have been following this issue quite closely for most of that time.

And I am very grateful to the EPA tonight.

I know that you have suffered a great deal of pressure.

I know there has been a great deal of false information.

And I really want to express my gratitude for the work that you have done for us, the citizens.

I do not want to repeat what others have said.

But I would just like to say something about GE's ad campaign.

I used to respect GE. I lived in Albany for many years.

I knew about Schenectedy GE and all of that.

I used to respect them. But at this point, it is impossible to respect anyone who has done what they have done to us.

And I am speaking not only of what they have done to the river and the way they have polluted the river, but what they are currently doing now to pollute the truth.

(Applause.)

MR. BELL: The damage that is being done intellectually right now, I think, is almost as damaging to the environment of the river as the actual damage because it is encouraging a type of thinking which is based on emotion, scare, half-truths, and that is a very dangerous sort of non-psychology which I think we have to all protect ourselves against.

If GE or anybody were taking out an

ad campaign defiling a racial group or proposing a product which was unsafe, we would have laws to stop that ad campaign.

But the fact is that they are talking about an issue, and they are allowed somehow to say things that are just plain not true, and we really do not have a lot we can do about it.

So, we have to turn to EPA. And we are grateful.

Thank you.

(Applause.)

MR. CASPE: The next speaker is Patrick Shannon.

MR. SHANNON: Patrick Shannon, S-h-a-n-n-o-n.

Five hundred pounds each year of PCBs come over the Federal Troy Dam, and this is after 23 years, when General Electric was told to stop dumping it into the river.

PCBs cause cancer. PCBs are endocrine-stoppers.

And contrary to the misleading ad campaign that we have been subjected to by General Electric, PCBs are not going away.

We can safely remove the PCBs and we

can still recreate in the river.

I would like to give you a copy of ads that we have seen over the past six months to review for your education.

So, now is our chance to safely remove the PCBs from the river forever and bring it back to its original health.

I applaud your proposed plan and encourage you to use it to its fullest extent to protect the health and viability of our communities.

If I did not say before, I represent the Sierra Club, and I thank you for your time.

MR. CASPE: Mary Jo Greene?

MS. GREENE: My name is Mary Jo Greene, with an "e".

I was in Saratoga and my comments were submitted, but I would like to address a few things here very briefly: economics and health.

First, I would like to offer a little clarification on dredging.

It seems to us that the most efficient and cost-effective and desirable means of removing the PCBs is by suction

dredging; that that is a lot safer than the clamshell. At least, we would respectfully request the EPA look further into this, and I just wanted to make that point.

With regard to health, I would like to point out that PCBs, although they are changed by anaerobic bacteria, they are changed to just another form of PCB in a less chlorinated form, which is still toxic. They are not fully dechlorinated in the anaerobic conditions in the sediment.

So, I would like to quote what John Peter Myers says, author of Our Stolen Future, who is an authority on endocrine disruption which is caused by PCBs and other hydrochlorinated hydrocarbons.

Myers says that, "Too much of the real testing of the chemicals takes place in the real world. It takes place in our bodies, in our children's bodies, in the global ecosystem."

Scientists and the fathers argue that we should take care of this problem now so that our kids can focus on all these other problems, all these other challenges that they face as

they grow up.

And I would quote Clearwater's Executive Director, Andy Melle, who said it all comes down to human potential.

As long as there are PCBs in the river and as long as there are chemicals anywhere in the environment interfering with our hormones and our brains, we are the losers; we may never know what we might have been, what we might have become, what we might have accomplished, or if our children might have fulfilled their dreams had they lived in a world free of these chemicals.

Thank you.

(Applause.)

MR. CASPE: Peter Murphy?

MR. MURPHY: My name is Peter Murphy. I am here to say that it seems that GE is the largest opponent to dredging.

They are concerned with the environment. They are concerned with our welfare. They are concerned with my welfare.

General Electric is the largest manufacturer of atomic bombs in the world.

Now, that is another issue, and it

does not matter where you stand on it.

But do you really believe that these bastards are concerned about the environment or your welfare?

(Applause.)

MR. MURPHY: They have a long history of corporate immorality.

It is the money. They do not want to spend the money. It is that simple.

(Applause.)

MR. CASPE: I would just like to acknowledge that, Karen, your arms must be getting tired.

The next speaker is Susan Murphy.

MS. MURPHY: That is my boy there that just spoke.

I am Susan Murphy, M-u-r-p-h-y, President of Ulster County Friends of Clearwater.

I am presenting this resolution at the request of the club, and I am real proud and happy to see that, of our 101 members, there are at least 17 of them present in this room.

I am just going to read a few

excerpts:

"Whereas, Ulster County Friends of Clearwater fully subscribes to the mission of the Hudson River remediation-forward group, Clearwater, Inc., to purify..." -- and I will paraphrase briefly -- to defend and restore the Hudson River, to enhance and improve the environment of the Hudson River Valley, to investigate any cause of contamination, to inform the public of such changes and to assist the public in taking measures to stop such contamination, to foster the historic and cultural heritage of the Hudson River Valley, and to concern itself with the wellbeing of those who dwell along its banks;

"And, whereas General Electric intentionally discharged PCBs into the river, often violating their discharge permits and allowed more PCBs to enter the river through negligence, despite full knowledge that they were a hazardous substance;

"And, whereas PCBs remain in the Hudson River not subject to natural breakdown and, whereas, PCBs are continually being dispersed through the river and the region by

action of the river and uptake into the food chain;

"And, whereas partial dechlorination yields molecules which are still toxic, as well as being water-soluble and volatile and mobile, therefore being more bioavailable;

"And, whereas PCBs pervade the food chain with total body loads building up in humans and other living things;

"And, whereas an estimated $800 million has been lost over the last 20 years because of the closure of Hudson River commercial fisheries and restrictions on recreationally-caught fish, with the result that the Hudson Valley has lost an imporant cultural heritage;

"And, whereas many people do eat the fish they catch in the Hudson River because they are either ignorant of or ignore the Department of Health's warnings;

"And, whereas EPA's plan calls for selected dredging of the hot spots, the dredge being deposited in already-established toxic waste facilities where they may be contained..." --

MR. CASPE: Ms. Murphy, Karen is indicating that your time has --

MS. MURPHY: I am speaking for 101 people here.

"...contained until technology is developed to safely distribute PCBs;

"Therefore, be it resolved the Ulster County Friends of Clearwater hereby expresses its endorsement of the EPA's remediation plan and urges that it be implemented as expeditiously as possible, all at General Electric's cost.

(Applause.)

MR. CASPE: (Reciting names of next five registered speakers.)

The next speaker is John Cross.

MR. CROSS: My name is John Cross, C-r-o-s-s.

I would like to thank you for allowing the community to voice its concerns, and thank you for your actions to date.

I live in Fishkill, downstream a little bit.

We live a short walk from the river. I speak tonight as a father. I have an

11-year-old son who likes to use his fishing rod.

I have to explain to him why he cannot go use his fishing rod in that river that is so close by.

Of course, he asks why, and I try to explain about the dangers of pollution and the dangers of cancer and other things he can get from the fish.

And his response, of course, is "Why can't we just clean it up?"

Well, I wish it were that easy. It sounds very easy, and I wish it were easy to describe to him why it is not that easy.

I can tell my son, for example, to clean up the mess in his room, which concerns only us.

GE has been fighting for 25 years to not clean up the mess they have been making in our community's backyard.

I would please ask you to tell GE to stop acting like a child.

They have profited for many years by making a mess, by dumping PCBs.

And you should make it very clear to

them that they should clean this up out of their profits and not out of taxpayer or ratepayer subsidies.

And, with all due respect, I would like to ask you to ask GE or to tell GE to stop sucking up to the politicians and to start sucking up PCBs.

Thank you very much.

(Laughter and applause.)

MR. CASPE: The next speaker is Jim Havender.

MR. HAVENDER: First, I would like to encourage you to take the full three years and more, if necessary, to study the technology of dredging because I am very skeptical that you can lift dirt that is just seeping chemicals without having mistakes occur.

And when a mistake occurs, I have an image of a large amount of PCBs being dumped into the river.

So, that raises the question -- of course, I do not know the best way to do this.

You have stated that the PCB levels up there do exceed the EPA recommended safe amounts.

The risks caused by chemicals released into the environment are often assessed by sample testing, which is a technology that is controversial.

So, I would like to see you study this with respect to the actual PCB levels that we are experiencing, that they are causing thus and thus; that they are causing, say, fish to die; that there are certain bioavailable levels.

They seem to be there for the fishermen to catch.

We have a member of the audience who has a level in his blood of PCBs that is the same as up there, and he seems to be perfectly healthy for now.

The levels that are quoted may stand up to peer review, but peer review, itself, can be a biased process.

There are scientists on both sides with lots of issues.

And anyone who wants a grant can almost guarantee getting a grant to build a study of cancer risk using animal studies.

So, that means that maybe scientists

are not always unbiased.

(Applause.)

MR. CASPE: The numbers we are using of .05 are the numbers that have been adopted by the Great Lake States, as well, for sport fishing.

It is not just a number that we pulled out as inconsistent with science elsewhere.

The next speaker is Rocko Rizzo.

MR. RIZZO: My name is Rocko Rizzo. I represent the Beacon Sloop Club.

The Beacon Sloop Club is a small environmental organization whose mission, along with the Hudson River Sloop Clearwater, is to keep the Hudson River clean through action and education.

Now, I am sure that many of you learned way back in kindergarten that, if you make a mess, it does not get cleaned up by itself; one must be responsible for cleaning it up.

All corporations, including GE, should heed this lesson.

The Beacon Sloop Club strongly agrees

with the EPA's decision about the necessity of dredging the Hudson River to remove the PCB contamination.

We urge you to use the most sophisticated dredging technologies available.

It is our view that the suction method of dredging is less invasive than others, and urge the EPA to use this method whenever possible.

I will personally urge the coming Bush administration to continue along the same vein as the current administration has done, hoping that, in the end, it will.

Thank you.

(Applause.)

MR. CASPE: The next speaker is Greg Howard.

MR. HOWARD: My name is Greg Howard, H-o-w-a-r-d.

I grew up here in Poughkeepsie, just about a mile from the Hudson.

First, I want to thank you for the fantastic work you have done in this presentation.

I read the summary of alternatives,

and it is excellent.

It looks like very good science, and I am very impressed.

I absolutely support the dredging program you have outlined.

I would actually prefer the more aggressive 0.03 dredging program.

But either one will result in a dramatic lowering of PCB levels in the Hudson River in the very near future.

I just read an article about a PCB clean-up project in Plattsburg, where they had a very big project to clean up a large amount of PCBs.

It went smoothly. It went on time. It went on budget. It did not cause any huge stirring of the sediment.

It was a great project. In fact, the article said that ducks would sit on the dredge while it was working.

This is not the destructive project that GE is telling us it is.

This is the right thing to do. And if GE wants to be a good corporate citizen, it should admit their culpability and support a

thorough dredging program like the one you have outlined tonight.

Thank you very much.

(Applause.)

MR. CASPE: The next speaker is Gary Matthews.

MR. MATTHEWS: Gary Matthews, M-a-t-t-h-e-w-s.

I live in Kingston, New York, on a boat on the river. I swim in the river every day whenever it is warm enough.

For the past 14 years, I have worked on commercial tugboats running out of New York Harbor, specifically along the Hudson River, New York Harbor, the New York State Barge Canal System.

One of the major jobs that we do on commercial tugboats is handle dredges, dredging equipment and dredge spoil barges.

I have personally witnessed both remedial and environmental dredging for dioxin. I have worked on the dredges and also on navigational dredging.

And these machines are not what GE shows in their ads.

They are much cleaner. There is no significant increase in turbidity around the dredging project.f

It can be done cleanly. It is cost effective. It is safe. And there is no reason not to do it.

Thank you.

(Applause.)

MR. CASPE: Jeanne Kelly?

MS. KELLY: I chose to live in New York State, specifically the Hudson River Valley, because of the Hudson River.

I chose to live on the west shore in Kingston, New York, due to all of the public river access.

I am the mother of a 12-year-old boy. We swim, sail and fish the river daily throughout the summer.

And it is all a great day, except that we cannot eat the fish that we catch because we have to release due to the effect that it is PCB laden.

We vote for dredging the Hudson. Let us clean up the river. Let everyone admit and do their responsibility.

We also want to thank Clearwater, Scenie Hudson and The Riverkeeper for instigating this entire effort from 30 years ago to the present.

And we will all keep going for it. Thank you.

(Applause.)

MR. CASPE: The next speaker is Beth Garthwaite.

MS. GARTHWAITE: My name is Beth Garthwaite, G-a-r-t-h-w-a-i-t-e.

I want to again thank the EPA for the work you have done, and also thank you for banning this nasty chemical in the first place.

I think it is ironic and sad that a river that is a national heritage river is also the country's largest Superfund site.

And I support targeted dredging as the best possible solution to an unacceptable situation.

Thank you.

MR. CASPE: (Inaudible.)

A PERSON: I have lived in the Hudson Valley nearly all my life. I am a U.S. Coast Guard-licensed captain, and I have worked on

the river for the past 15 years. The Hudson River is very important to me.

And this is a very personal issue for me.

I am tired of people in the lower Hudson Valley being held hostage by a corporation that, itself, is morally bankrupt.

General Electric has a deplorable environmental record, and it has shown reckless disregard over and over again for the environment and the public health here in New York State and elsewhere.

They made millions of dollars in profits manufacturing this electric equipment in Fort Edward and Hudson Falls, while dumping this chemical at our expense.

So, it seems fair that they pay for a clean-up that will protect our health.

They want us to believe that they are an advocate and a friend of the Hudson but, if they actually were, I do not think they would be spending millions of dollars attacking the EPA, attacking environmental organizations and trying to subvert what I think is a fair and democratic process.

Our country is a country filled with believers in technology. We are proud of our achievements.

We were the first nation to send a person to the moon.

And GE is a company that basically made its reputation and became an American icon for promoting and creating new technologies.

And here is a proven technology, environmental dredging, that has been proven that it works.

And they are telling us that it cannot be done.

I think it can be done, and it should be done.

Thank you very much.

(Applause.)

MR. CASPE: We were up to speaker number 29 with John Mylod.

We have 80 speakers registered to speak.

So, we are going to go to 40, and then we are going to take a 10- to 15-minute break.

And we will begin promptly after the

break.

I know you all probably want to get home.

The next speaker is John Mylod.

MR. MYLOD: John Mylod, M-y-l-o-d, Poughkeepsie, New York.

I, too, want to express my appreciation to EPA, Region 2, and all the other Federal agencies for all the work they have done on this project over the years.

I also want to commend Mrs. Browner and Governor Pataki and DEC Commissioner Cahill and Attorney General Spencer for their support in this project.

I do support the project, although I think I am just for the first time seeing the slides tonight about an incremental increase in cost leading to a pretty large incremental increase in cost for removal of the PCBs from the river.

I think the broader project would be something I would support more than the preferred alternative right now.

However, I certainly do, at the minimum, support the alternative that EPA is

providing for tonight.

I have two other quick points. One point is -- and you have heard a lot about it tonight in terms of the appalling disinformation campaign that GE has waged over the last several months.

I think that EPA and the DEC ought to step forward at this point and provide some more counteracting information to counterbalance the public perception --

(Applause.)

MR. MYLOD: ... in simple ways, ways in which you are media savvy, as they are.

After all, they are doing commercials. They sell products with the same kind of disinformation that we see here.

Worse, however, in the case of dredging, it is intimidation also.

There are a lot of people upriver who are intimidated by this.

(Applause.)

MR. MYLOD: The other thing I wanted to say tonight is that I have been involved in this for 25 years.

Twenty years ago, we were on track --

the EPA and DEC -- to fix this problem.

The Reagan/Bush Administration came in, and the project hit a stall.

I want everybody in this room to not let that happen now with the incoming administration in Washington.

(Applause.)

MR. MYLOD: This is America's river. We must prevail here.

(Applause.)

MR. CASPE: Catherine Jahn?

MS. JAHN: I am Catherine Jahn, J-a-h-n. I represent the United States Department of Interior's Fish and Wildlife Service.

And I am pleased to present these comments on behalf of the Fish and Wildlife Service, and I thank you for the opportunity to do so.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service strongly supports the removal of PCB-contaminated sediments from the Upper Hudson River, and commends EPA for its progress in cleaning up the Hudson River.

The Fish and Wildlife Service is a natural resource trustee on behalf of the

public to restore natural resources that have been injured by hazardous substances such as PCBs.

As a trustee, the Fish and Wildlife Service seeks permanent protective remedies at Superfund sites such as the Hudson River.

The Fish and Wildlife Service endorses sediment removal as a permanent clean-up action to reduce future adverse effects to our natural resources.

The Hudson River is a national, historical, cultural and environmental resource.

Today, PCBs continue to be released from contaminated sediments as well as from fractured bedrock below Hudson Falls.

Many of the natural resources of the Hudson River Ecosystem have been exposed to PCBs, and they have been grossly contaminated.

Current concentrations of PCBs in fish remain high.

The Fish and Wildlife Service agrees with EPA that without an active removal of the PCBs, the concentrations in the fish will continue to threaten the public health and

natural resources for many decades.

The EPA and the Fish and Wildlife Service are trustees of complementary objectives in how to deal with hazardous waste sites.

The EPA focuses on clean-up work of the hazardous substances and protecting human health and the environment.

Trustees, such as the Fish and Wildlife Service, are charged with assessing past, current and potential harm to natural resources and planning restoration actions.

The Fish and Wildlife Service has been working closely with the EPA throughout the remedial process since 1997.

The Federal and State natural resource trustees, including the Fish and Wildlife Service, are conducting natural resource damage assessment of PCB contamination of the Hudson River.

The Fish and Wildlife Service supports EPA's intention to proceed with dredging.

Fish and Wildlife believes that there are long-term benefits in sediment removal

which outweigh the unavoidable short-term impacts on natural resources.

Aquatic habitats disturbed can be restored.

Those restored habitats will provide higher quality services than they provide in their present contaminated state.

The Fish and Wildlife Service urges all New Yorkers and the Nation to support EPA's efforts to remediate this American heritage river.

Thank you.

(Applause.)

MR. CASPE: Wendy Rose?

MS. ROSE: My name is Wendy Rose. I live in Clintondale. I am here representing Planet Waves Digital Media.

You might be familiar with the Planet Waves article in the New Paltz Chronogram, by Eric Francis.

Eric has dedicated the last nine years of his life to studying and investigating PCB effects on people and, more specifically, on the scenic New Paltz campus where, in 1991, a clean-up was not very well done perhaps.

And there are fears that there are still dangerous levels where students are living there today.

I have a new friend; her name is Kirstan Connelly. She lived there in 1991 with her roommate, Jennifer Fulston.

Jennifer died of leukemia on December 5th, and one of her dying wishes was -- and she asked Kirstan, who is a reporter, to please, please get a health roster together, get people that went to that college, see if they are having any health problems.

And tonight I see that perhaps we can expand that health roster to include people in the area with health problems that live along the river.

I would ask you, if you would, please, to jot down Kirsten's e-mail address.

Right now, she is doing research and getting a roster together and she needs your support.

Her e-mail address is Kirstan, K-i-r-s-t-a-n, 246 at aol.com.

I would appreciate it if you could contact her and lend her your support.

Thank you.

MR. CASPE: (Reciting names of next five registered speakers.)

The next speaker is Warren Chester.

(No response.)

MR. CASPE: Ann McClellan?

A PERSON: Ann was not able to make it. I am going to read this on her behalf.

In support of many of my colleagues and friends, we feel strongly that General Electric should be financially responsible for its reprehensible degradation of our precious Hudson River by dumping 1.3 million pounds in it of carcinogenic PCBs.

We agree that the review process, with scientific technicalities, demonstrates that the presence of PCBs in the river is damaging not only to humans but to many other forms of life.

The benefits of hydraulic dredging is based on many statistics which I am sure will be cited repeatedly.

I will fill in one technical observation that is unlikely to be addressed by too many folks.

I have spent quite a bit of time underwater; often in scuba gear and once for 18 hours overnight in an underwater hotel.

I am also an avid kayaker and have explored much of the Hudson.

Anyone who believes that PCBs are going to quietly rest at the bottom of the river and deconstruct on their own is deluded.

Currents have already moved these things down the river.

Fifty percent of the New York Harbor's contaminants before the water flows into the Atlantic are reportedly GE's PCBs.

The stuff does not even sit quietly in standing water.

Even with absolutely no current, aquatic life feeds off the bottom and disrupts it.

There should be little argument about the ecologic dangers of PCBs.

The real issue is how best to counter the ongoing negative impacts this damage continues to cause.

Virtually every organization I have worked with either in paid or volunteer

positions has stressed a moral obligation for each generation to leave a better legacy for future generations.

MR. CASPE: I am sorry, but your time is up. You can give us the written statement, and we will be sure to read the rest.

The next speaker is Marla Hall.

MS. HALL: My name is Marla Hall, Project Coordinator with Nyberg. We are also a member of over 70 student organizations which make up the Coalition of Students for a Cleaner Hudson.

And I would commend the EPA on their decision to dredge the river.

I would like to also just comment that a man by the name of Ralph Nader once commented that people very rarely, when asked what they own, list the woods in their back yard, as they rarely list the river that runs through the neighborhood.

They often times list their homes or house.

And I think it is a really, really interesting insight.

If someone were to come in and steal

your car or rob your home, they would be thrown in jail or they would be forced to pay fines.

GE has robbed us all. They have robbed the fishing industry of a river that was once teaming with fish.

They have robbed people of the ability to recreate in this river that runs right through their back yard.

And they have robbed the wildlife and the people around it of their health.

And I think it is time for GE to pay. That time is now.

Thank you.

(Applause.)

MR. CASPE: The next speaker is Amy Kletter, K-l-e-t-t-e-r.

(No response.)

MR. CASPE: Beth Walsh-Thorn?

MS. WALSH-THORN: I am Beth Walsh-Thorn, W-a-l-s-h hyphen T-h-o-r-n, a resident of Poughkeepsie, born and raised in the Hudson Valley.

I would like to thank the EPA on the presentation of its proposal.

What I would like to say tonight is,

as to the dredging, I would like the EPA to consider some of the various methods of dredging such as the suction method as opposed to the clamshell.

Thank youl.

(Applause.)

MR. SMYTH: Anthony Edward Smyth, S-m-y-t-h. I am with the Fishkill Region Caretakers.

Many years ago, Robert H. Doyle, founder of Riverkeeper, wrote a book called The Hudson River.

And in that book, he mentioned that he noticed that, in 1888 -- there was -- the Congress of the United States passed The New York Harbor Act.

And that Act is still in force. It has never been repealed. It is still in full effect.

And Doyle has enforced it from time to time as the prophet of the Riverkeeper, and we could enforce it again today.

This Act means that every time GE dumped PCBs into the Hudson River, it was illegal.

And the Government should not bear any cost of cleaning up the Hudson River.

The Government never permitted dumping PCBs into the Hudson River.

Thank you.

(Applause.)

MR. HALL: My name is Manfred Hall. I have been a resident of the City of Poughkeepsie for 40 years.

I live in the First Ward which borders the river, and I can see the river from my back porch.

Because of what GE did, I have been buying bottled water for about 20 years.

A lot of people cannot do that because over 30 percent of the people in my ward live below the Federal poverty line.

A lot of homeless and poor people fish in the river and eat the fish because it is better than starving.

And I fully support the dredging as way overdue.

I just have one suggestion. Since GE thinks PCBs are so good, why don't you dump the sediment in their back yard when you are done

with it.

(Applause.)

MR. CASPE: The next speaker is Glen Burger.

(No response.)

MR. CASPE: The next speaker is Jill Traffante.

MS. LUCAS: Jill could not be here tonight. She is representing the Vassar College Greens before an environmental organization and Congress.

My name is Christine Lucas, and I am going to speak for her.

I would just like to say that, on behalf of the Vassar Greens, that many students that I have talked to in organizing this campaign will support the environmental dredging technology that has been chosen to clean up the PCBs.

We support the suction removal dredging, and we support the fact that GE pay for this clean-up plan.

And I would like to thank the EPA for putting so much time and effort into researching all the different methods and

coming up with a clean-up plan that sounds really good.

And I would just like to say, finally, that myself and a lot of the other students have been organizing an active force to follow the follow-through of this clean-up plan.

Thank you very much.

(Applause.)

MR. CASPE: We are going to take a 15-minute break at this time.

(Whereupon, a brief recess was taken from 9:00 o'clock p.m. to 9:15 o'clock p.m.)

MR. CASPE: All right. We are ready to continue.

(Reciting names of next five registered speakers.)

MR. NAGEL: My name is Fred Nagel, N-a-g-e-l. I am from Rhinebeck, New York. And I am here for the Dutchess Greens.

I will be very short. I just want to mention that one person that did not make it is Congressman John Sweeney.

Someone said he was in Florida, maybe on vacation. I don't know what he is doing

down there --

(Laughter.)

MR. NAGEL: But John Sweeney really has spent this summer trying to put riders on various bills to get GE off the hook.

I also want to mention former Congressman Gerry Solomon who spent about 20 years trying to get GE off the hook, and is now working as a lobbyist for GE.

And I would suggest that we clean up the PCBs.

But let us not kid ourselves. We are not going to come to one meeting in a year, and we are not going to do this in one meeting.

Actually, I think we are going to have to work continually in politics and start cleaning up the toxic waste through Congress, which in the past and even presently, allows things like this to happen.

(Applause.)

MR. VEEDER: Jim Veeder, V-e-e-d-e-r. I am from Saugerties.

There are so many people that said so many good things tonight.

I just thought I would say a few

other things that have not been said.

My ancestors sailed up the Hudson River 40 years after Henry Hudson, with part of the first wave of the European invasion of North America back when the Hudson River was clean and unpolluted and safe.

And the people who had lived here for hundreds of years had a sustainable culture and lifestyle which eventually was ruined; specifically, for GE to ruin for profit.

I applaud the EPA for doing something about this.

It is very unusual to me to see the Government doing something good, for the health and wellbeing of the people and the land.

However, given the EPA mandate as to the kind of middle approach to the clean-up rather than the more strict clean-up possibility, it seems that, at the beginning, there is already a compromised plan; that EPA is just going to get beaten back to make further compromises later on down the line by GE bribing -- I'm sorry -- exerting political pressure, as it were.

I think I would like the EPA to fight

for the most thorough possible clean-up of the PCBs.

Thank you very much.

(Applause.)

MS. STEELE: I am Joanne Steele, S-t-e-e-le. I am from the Town of Esopus.

I was looking at a paper here that was saying it is $460 million. And I was thinking, "Ooh, that is a lot of money."

Now, after listening to the people around the room who know these things, I have learned that GE's stock has doubled in the last three years.

And I asked someone how much money General Electric had made in the last, say, 10 years.

And they said, well, they did not know but, multiplying back, probably about $150 billion.

So, from the time they started dumping this stuff in the river to the time that they were supposed to take it out, 1950 to roughly 1977, I figure they made -- I don't know -- 50 billion in profits as a result of doing this dumping.

I mean, the company has more money than France --

(Applause.)

MS. STEELE: I mean, you look at the $450 million, and it looks like a lot of money but, frankly, I think GE has, you know, raised cheap to a new level. It is pocket change to them, basically.

So, I just wanted you folks to keep that in perspective.

And, thank you, EPA, for doing what you are doing.

I hope we do not have to come back and help you keep from sliding back on this and saying to the public officials that we should share the expense, when there should be no doubt that it should be at GE's expense to clean up this river.

If it comes to us having to share the expense, that is fine by me, as long as we equally share in the profit that they have made, the 150 billion or whatever.

(Applause.)

MS. CHADWICK: My name is Eileen Chadwick, and I am a scientist.

I am a resident of the Town of Wappingers, near where the Wappingers Creek enters into the Hudson River, a beautiful estuarial spot.

I have lived near the banks of the Hudson for 30 years, and I have raised my family there. I have enjoyed the richness of it.

I would just like to urge us all to look at this from a moment-in-history point of view.

We really have a wonderful opportunity here.

I do not know how long the Hudson River and the Hudson River Valley have been here, but I am sure it is tens of thousands of years.

And all those years of history did not pollute the river. It took industrialization and mankind probably only 60 or 70 years to make it as brown as mud.

And the clean-up that has occurred so far has happened because of grass-roots folks like Riverkeeper and Scenic Hudson and so forth.

And a lot of great thing have happened. But we cannot clean up the PCBs by having pick-up days and so forth. We need an effort like you have described.

And I really do not think anybody can look forward into the history books without thinking that this just is a moment in time.

And what is history going to say about the Hudson River Valley and its glorious history and its teaming life and the people it has supported for thousands of years?

And what are they going to write about this choice we have now?

In the next few years, we have to take advantage of this opportunity and undo what has been done to the Hudson River Valley.

And I would just like to say to the people from GE here how absolutely insulted I feel by what they have put out in the ads.

And it does not take a scientist to separate the fact from the fiction.

I thank the EPA for doing what it has done.

(Applause.)

MR. CASPE: (Reciting the names of

the next five registered speakers.)

MR. GENOVESE: Joe Genovese, G-e-n-o-v-e-s-e.

First, I want to thank the EPA for all they have done regarding this matter.

I have lived in the Hudson River Valley since 1964, and my love affair with the river goes back almost that long.

I personally, as many of you, are sickened literally about what GE has done in polluting this beautiful river.

I am further sickened each time I see or hear one of GE's TV or radio commercials whose sole purpose is to avoid or delay paying to clean up the ruinous mess that they have made.

The implications of GE's actions is that their wealth and the wealth of their shareholders is more important than the fish and wildlife that live in and use the river, not to mention the human implications.

If that is GE's belief, I disagree. Environment first.

I urge, as EPA recommends, that we clean up the Hudson. The future of the river

depends on us.

Thank you.

(Applause.)

MR. DERBY: Scott Derby. I am with Dutchess County Greens.

I have no science to add to this. All I can add is the reflection that I can remember having -- when I was lucky enough to get a vacation in France many years ago, and I got to stand on the banks of the Noire River near the chateau where I was staying, I had learned so much about that river through my education, that it was like a moment that could stand in history.

But that moment was very fleeting. And I remember also thinking that this place didn't hold a candle to where I come from; that the Hudson River, to whomever has seen it, is one of the most breathtaking places on this planet.

And I have lived from Honolulu all the way to Mississippi.

And, to me, it is beyond unconscionable what has happened to our river; not the fact that it happened, but beyond that:

the fact that the people who have done such a thing will not take the responsibility for it, and that we and the people who have been elected to represent us cannot fight for ourselves and are not forcing them to do that.

I am not against anybody making a profit, but I am most certainly against somebody making a profit when it comes at the expense of my health and the health of my family.

I am appalled by their lack of dignity to say, "We are sorry, and we will try to clean it up."

I think that even if GE is forced to pay for it, in the end we are going to pay for it because they are just going to pass the cost on to us in the products they sell, through ripping off contracts with the Government, through the messes they make or jacking up the already exhorbitant interest rates they charge to people through their GE Finance Corporation.

And for those who are not for the cleaning up of the river, that, of course, is your prerogative, but I would just like to mention that we are going to lose more money

because of the loss of tourism and of people relocating from here when a full understanding and the ramifications of this come to bear.

I am asking the Environmental Protection Agency to keep up the good fight, and to please do the job of representing those of us who cannot fight for ourselves.

Thank you very much.

(Applause.)

MR. GARRON: My name is Philip Garron. I am a City of Poughkeepse resident.

I was born in 1979, which means that for my entire life, the Hudson has been a source of filth and toxicity.

I want to thank the EPA for this effort. I hope that one day, while I am still alive, it becomes a river I can smile upon.

And, in light of that, I do hope that you take the most aggressive stance which, I suppose, is suction dredging.

Please: No holds barred, please, because I would like to see my Hudson River.

(Applause.)

MR. DICKSTEIN: D -- "as in dredge" -- i-c-k-s-t-e-i-n, Stanley Dickstein.

I have been a member of Clearwater

for many many years.

I have served on the Board of Directors for not quite as many, but a lot of years.

I have noticed that, in the papers, claims are being made that the EPA proposal is ill-considered.

What we have heard here tonight from Mr. Caspe, who described the outline of the remediation, how isolated concentrations of PCBs were identified -- Mr. Tomchuk described the detailed scientific basis for the need to take action, which will protect current and future generations.

Ms. Hess described the detailed scientific Feasibility Study, which identified the preferred means of remediating in order to protect human health and the environment.

We might, in some ideal world, employ the highest level of remediation which, frankly, I would like to see.

But we live in a real world, and limits may have to be set even though there would be higher risks to human and environmental health.

Delays arising from administrative acrobatics far exceeded the planned project time.

Consider also that, on the order of magnitude, more fill has been moved with primitive machinery, such as at the Panama Canal or, going back a little further but a little closer to us, the old Erie Canal.

I think that it is time that we should get it done.

Thank you.

(Applause.)

MS. SHANSON: My name is Rebecca Shanson, S-h-a-n-s-o-n.

I consider myself to be an interested voter and taxpayer.

My father has worked for General Electric for 30 years. GE supported his family. I do not consider GE to be evil.

But their current actions are incriminating.

They have been feeding this information to many innocent people throughout the Hudson River Valley.

It has been said already, but I urge

you to consider using the media -- television, newspapers, radio, and the U.S. Postal Service -- to spread real information.

I am a student at Ulster Community College, studying Environmental Biology and, as such, I thank you for your in-depth research on the PCB contaminants in the Hudson River, and for choosing the most effective way to permanently remove PCBs from the area.

Please remove it as soon as possible for our sake as well as for the sake of the world.

People forget that the fish don't just stay here; neither does water.

Penguins in Antarctica have high concentrations of DDT.

If DDT has traveled that far, I wonder where the PCBs are going to turn up.

I am also a landowner, a wife and expectant mother.

And it is in this capacity, that I urge you to continue with the clean-up plan, and I give you my deepest gratitude.

Thank you for your decision to dredge the Hudson and make it safe for my family.

And, again, I would ask you to do this as soon as possible.

Thank you.

(Applause.)

MR. TYNER: My name is Joel Tyner, T-y-n-e-r, from the Town of Putnam.

Most of what I wanted to say has been said before, but it may just bear a little repeating.

You know, particularly as to what the last speaker just said and what was said earlier about thanking you for coming to this decision and for all your hard work, I second that.

But, you know, I think that we would all be a little -- I mean, I think that a lot of people in the Upper Hudson Valley have been brainwashed.

Once people know the truth about the new environmental dredging technologies -- and there is a camera down at the bottom of the river to detect any turbidity -- once the people know the truth about -- I cannot emphasize enough how frustrated I am about so many people having been brainwashed.

And I think it has even happened here in Dutchess County, where people are halfway reasonable.

They have been brainwashed. Have you see any of GE's TV ads?

Please consider socking some money into a public information campaign on the realities of dredging.

That's it. I just want the people that are remaining here -- you know, unfortunately, there are a bunch of Town Boards in the Upper Hudson Valley that have said, "Oh, you know, we do not want PCBs dredged."

I am asking all the activists that are still here tonight to work on the County legislators and the Town Boards across Dutchess County.

We can get resolutions passed by the Town Boards across Dutchess County and in the County Legislature for the suction pump technology.

Lastly, I wanted to express my gratitude, again, for your coming to this decision.

With the new Administration coming in

and GE's onslaught, we are talking about powerful forces.

If yours job are in jeopardy, please remember that our lives are at stake.

(Applause.)

MR. CASPE: I can assure you our jobs will all be in jeopardy.

Sarah Love?

MS. LOVE: I, too, want to thank the EPA for being here and for all of the work that you have done in your scientific studies and for being a strong representative for the public and for the wildlife and fish that could not be here to speak.

I support EPA's decision, which is based on extensive scientific studies to remove PCBs from hot spots in the Hudson River.

Based on the PCB contamination, the Hudson River was declared a Superfund site 20 years ago.

It is time for GE to clean up its toxic mess.

GE contaminated our Hudson River, a public resource and home to wildlife and fish.

Contrary to the PR blitz that GE has

been conducting for months, the river is not cleaning itself.

PCBs are toxic substances that do not disappear or remediate themselves.

The PCBs are being dispersed throughout the river. They are contaminating and harming organisms living in and along the Hudson River.

The PCB sediments must be removed in order to clean the river.

I encourage the use of the most sophisticated technologies for the environmental dredging and removal of the PCBs.

Thank you.

(Applause.)

MR. CASPE: (Reciting names of next 10 registered speakers.)

Howard Tubbs?

MR. O'KEEFE: I am not Howard Tubbs. I was not able to be here until a few minutes ago and missed my place, according to my friend who was here.

My name is Bob O'Keefe. I live in Tivoli.

The campaign that GE has been running

is most bothersome.

The ad campaign that GE has been running, of course, is something we are all quiet upset about.

The dredging that we see happening on the TV commercials is obviously nothing like what we are going to see.

And I just think that if the Texas Rangers can pay Alex Rodriguez $250 million, GE can pay $500 million to clean up the river.

It is not an astronomical sum of money to a company this size.

(Applause.)

MR. TUBBS: I am Howard Tubbs, T-u-b-b-s.

I am here tonight to kind of anlayze what is going on in this beautiful Hudson Valley.

I cannot say that I am in favor of the plan.

It is being pushed down people's throats, I think.

The EPA is making a mistake in dredging the river.

I have been a boating addict on the

Hudson River for 45 years.

And it is the most beautiful river in the nation.

And do we have the right to make another town or municipality accept our toxic waste?

There is going to be a lot of stuff removed, and we are going to have to find some place to dump this stuff.

I do not think that we have the right to force our contaminated waste on other people.

I do not think we have the right to transport it by truck or rail.

And I do not think we have the right to force GE to, more or less, foot the whole bill for this whole thing.

It has been brought out that they did nothing wrong. It was not illegal at the time that they dumped the waste.

With GE, the way they work, this project goes back to waste-dumping probably 40 years or more, and that is a long, long time for those PCBs to be dissipated into the water current downstream past Poughkeepsie and

Hyde Park.

That is all I have to say.

MR. CASPE: Thank you. Let me just clarify two things.

One is that we are not transporting the waste by truck.

It will be transported by rail cars, sealed rail cars after dewatering.

You should not picture trucks moving around dripping PCBs. That is something that, frankly, is not in the plan. It is not possible because we are not going to be using trucks.

The second point I would just make -- when you talk about forcing communities to take this waste, this waste will be bid; people will bid to take this waste.

There are landfills that are licensed to take these kinds of wastes throughout the United States.

And they will bid on this job, and they will bid on this job to take the waste because, frankly, they will make a lot of money by taking that waste.

And communities and companies

throughout the United States will probably bid very hard if we go forward with this plan to take that waste because there is a lot of money to be made.

So, I just wanted to clarify that we are not going to force that waste on anybody.

MR. TUBBS: Let me say one more thing.

The waste that they are taking away by sealed rail car has to go someplace.

And the cost is going to depend on how far it has to go.

MR. CASPE: No. Once you put it in the rail car -- the loading and the offloading is most of the money.

Once you put it in the rail car, moving it, distances do not make that much of a difference.

MR. TUBBS: Well, Scenic Hudson is procuring land around here for different purposes.

Maybe they can donate some land in Hyde Park by Roosevelt's Estate.

MR. CASPE: I just wanted to clarify those things.

The next speaker will be Walter Pearson.

(No response.)

MR. CASPE: The next speaker is Laurie Siegel.

MS. SIEGEL: My name is Laurie Siegel, S-i-e-g-e-l.

I am a lifelong resident of the Hudson Valley.

My deep love of the river and my concern for our local environment has brought me here tonight.

I strongly support the dredging. It is the best option for cleaning up our river.

The PCBs are not going to just go away unless they are taken away.

In fact, they are moving downstream closer to us right here. They are dispersing throughout the river.

PCBs are a known health hazard and, as a woman, I am particularly concerned about reproductive problems and breast cancer and all the other problems that are caused to women by PCBs.

I am also concerned about our future

generations, as PCBs are suspected to cause birth defects, learning disabiities; and they are endocrine disruptors.

Our children should not have to face these problems.

I would like to just pose a question -- first of all, I do want to thank the EPA for all the hard work that it has done.

And I do appreciate the decisions that the EPA has made, but I do have a question.

The EPA says that you guys are going to remove 100,000 pounds of PCBs from the river.

Didn't GE dump 1.1 million pounds of PCBs in the river?

I just wanted to know what the process is, and what happens to the remaining PCBs.

MR. CASPE: It is around 100,000 pounds of PCBs in that Upper River that are probably going to be left behind.

So, there is 100,000 pounds we are removing.

There is around 100,000 pounds that

are there that may be dispersed in very low quantities that are really in areas that are really depositional, where there is no danger for them to be kicked up or get into the environment. So, that is 200,000 pounds.

The other 1.1 million pounds that go over Troy Dam downriver to a variety of places throughout the river disperse throughout the river.

MR. CASPE: The next speaker is Alex Shanson.

MR. SHANSON: My name is Alex Shanson, S-h-a-n-s-o-n.

I strongly support the EPA's decision to dredge the river because, even if it takes a long time to complete the task, I think it is well worth the endeavor.

Because I am really concerned not so much for our own generation, but for all the generations hence forward.

And, as such, it is really important to get rid of the contaminants.

Thank you very much for your decision. I strongly support it.

Thank you.

MR. CASPE: The next speaker is Christine Lucas.

(No response.)

MR. CASPE: The next speaker is Rita Sugita.

(No response.)

MR. CASPE: The next speaker is Sister Kathleen Donnelly.

SISTER DONNELLY: My name is Kathleen Donnelly, D-o-n-n-e-l-l-y, and I come from Rhinebeck, New York.

My congregation is a member of the Tri-State Coalition for Responsibile Investment.

We are a group of faith investors and religious shareholders in General Electric.

As religious shareholders, we welcome the EPA's announcement of the Hudson River clean-up plan as a crucial step in restoring the river to its vital role in the economy and the lives of the people of the Hudson River Valley.

For the past five years, religious investors have pressed GE to stop preventing the clean-up of the largest Superfund site.

Religious institutional investors continue to focus on the health of people, the environment and the economic impact on commercial fishing and recreational industries.

We speak for people, especially poor people who need to feed their families from the Hudson who are most at risk.

Rather than spending shareholder assets to further delay the clean-up of the Hudson, we call upon General Electric, our company, to cooperate with Federal authorities to facilitate the recovery of the Hudson River.

We know that one weekend, recently, General Electric bought Honeywell for $45 billion.

Our resolution at the April 2001 shareholder meeting is entitled "The Request for Disclosure of the Costs of Delay of Cleaning Up PCBs in the Hudson River."

We brought this to the shareholders last year and received a surprising 8.3 percent vote.

We are going to take it back again this year.

In closing, quoting from our

Executive Director, "The people of the Hudson River Valley will be forever grateful to the Federal Government for restoring the health of this river and removing the highly toxic PCBs."

We can now look forward to a day when people can once again fish from the river, swim in the river and be nurtured by this great gift of God's creation.

Thank you.

(Applause.)

MR. CASPE: The next speaker is Ed Harkness.

MR. HARKNESS: Hi. I am a member of the Caribbean Latin American Support Project.

You might wonder what the hell does that have to do with PCBs in the Hudson.

Okay. Even if we were to believe in the lies of GE, they are not going away. Where is away?

It is a pretty small planet, and PCBs do not have a half-life even like radioactive materials that are going to somewhere. They are even going to Latin America.

One of the members of our group has a serious case of breast cancer who lives not

that far from the Hudson.

Okay. That is what that has got to do with.

Now, I want to address the issue of -- okay. General Electric is also on WAMC, the Science Forum, telling little school kids that our best source of energy for the future is going to be coal and nuclear.

These are pathological world-class liars, one of the most evil corporations in the United States.

They are the ones that sponsor all the news pundit shows, buy the politicians.

Why, we have a President now who basically stalled the election thanks partly to GE.

And I wonder how the EPA is going to deal with General Electric when "The Shrub" is in power, the man who Ralph Nader says, essentially, is a giant corporation disguised as a human being.

I wish you guys luck. You have had eight years of the Clinton/Gore Administration, and now, finally, you guys are moving.

And I say "Right on." I wish this

could have happened sooner because I wonder how we are going to get through the Bush Administration with this.

And God has blessed you folks. And General Electric needs to be boycotted.

They are just one of the worst. They are right up there with Phillip Morris. They put good things to death.

They are huge profiteers. Nasty, nasty, nasty, nasty.

So, right on. You know, suck that stuff out of the river with the suction method preferably; whatever it takes.

It is going to go somewhere, and putting it off just means it is going to take more money to get less of it out of there.

Go forward ASAP, "Shrub" or no "Shrub".

(Laughter and applause.)

MR. CASPE: The next speaker is Andie Weiss Bardstadt.

DR. BARDSTADT: I am Dr. Andie Weiss Bardstadt.

I am a chemist and toxicologist. I live in Catskill, an easy walk from the Hudson

River.

So, this issue is personal as well as scientific for me.

I want to thank the EPA for rejecting the junk science that was funded by General Electric and also for resisting the propoganda campaigns that General Electric has funded for probably over the last 20 years.

On December 2nd, I had published an Op Ed column in The Poughkeepsie Journal that was based on the issue of contamination of a certain portion of the Hudson near a bridge.

The Department of Environmental Conservation has been thinking about opening up a portion of the Hudson River below Bear Mountain Bridge as a buy-catch for shad fishing.

And using their data from 1988 in the draft form, I discovered that although the average there is below 2 ppm, which the FDA declares as safe -- although it is not -- if you look at the range of contamination in the fish that they caught, it ranges from negligible to three or more times as much as the FDA limits.

So, a person who eats a fish -- or, catches a fish from the Hudson and then eats it has a very significant risk of ingesting much too much PCBs.

So, it is not just north of Troy that people have to worry about eating fish that are seriously contaminated with General Electric's PCBs.

In Poughkeepsie and further south, anybody who catches a fish or, if the fishery is opened, who eats a Striped Bass from a fish store will still have a serious danger of getting a very large dose of PCBs.

So, it is definitely to our advantage that the PCBs are dredged out of the river so that some day, indeed, we can go down to the river, catch a fish and eat it.

And as a toxicologist, I do not think that a 40 percent decrease of the amount of PCBs going over the dam is sufficient.

At very low levels, PCBs are dangerous to humans.

(Applause.)

MR. CASPE: The next speaker is Karen Hinderstein.

MS. HINDERSTEIN: I am Karen Hinderstein, H-i-n-d-e-r-s-t-e-i-n.

I just found out that GE, by dicharging PCBs, violated their discharge permits when they discharged it.

So, it was not legal. And Monsanto, who made the PCBs for GE, told GE not to allow PCBs to get into the river because of its toxicity.

I know that we should not be eating fish out of the river.

I know there is a whole bunch of shad fishermen who cannot fish for shad anymore. There are so many striped bass that we cannot eat, and PCBs are turning up in shad now.

You cannot fish for shad or striped bass now anymore.

People do not think of certain animals generally as important, but I do remember Bat Conservation International -- that is no joke -- and every creature, I think, deserves whatever we can give them.

I mean, we have pretty much wiped out everything on earth. We should try and save the fish and all creatures, not just ourselves.

I mean, we could just wipe everything else out, including ourselves. But -- I could just keep rattling on.

I would go for more dredging. I think this is too little, hopefully not too late.

I would urge you to ensure the safest dredging possible and I hope you can prevail through the next four years.

Thank you.

MR. CASPE: The next speaker in Irwin Sperber.

MR. SPERBER: Good evening. I am Irwin Sperber.

I am a member of a number of the local environmental organizations, some of which have already been represented earlier this evening.

I also teach at SUNY New Paltz. I am a medical sociologist, and I am a concerned citizen.

I raised two daughters here in the Hudson Valley.

And I would just like to add my thanks to all of you good people in the EPA for

the difficult and arduous work you have done investigating the PCB problem and arriving at conclusions that we all welcome.

But, now, it is time for the other shoe to drop.

Basically, I think that delay -- which is what has been happening for the last three decades -- has been very much an indication of General Electric's success in avoiding any liability for the terrible harm it has done both to the heatlh and the economy of New York State, especially along the Hudson River Valley.

GE tends to win in any political debate or any court of law or any constitutional harrang with the U.S. Supreme Court.

All that is necesary for GE to do in terms of its corporate objective to avoid paying out any money for the dredging is delay, and it has been successful so far.

In fact, GE has been passing along the cost for doing business to someone else; namely, the taxpayers of New York State.

And it is time to pass that cost of

doing busines where it belongs, squarely back on the shoulders of General Electric.

And we also need to take into account the economic and social cost to New Yorkers, especially its commercial fishermen, area residents who cannot safely swim in or fish in or even wade in the river for fear of contamination.

And we need to be concerned about the children whose IQs are lower than they otherwise would be because of PCB exposure.

Again, I want to thank you good people in the EPA for work done, and let you know that we are 100 percent behind you.

Thank you.

(Applause.)

MR. CASPE: The next speaker is Dr. Gary Seymour.

(No response.)

A PERSON: May I ask a question in his stead?

If he is not here, may I take his place?

MR. CASPE: Let me go through the cards.

If you would like to speak after I go through the cards that people have put in, then you are welcome to do so or ask a question.

The next speaker is Sarah Underhill.

MS. UNDERHILL: Hi. My name is spelled just the way it sounds.

Again, like everyone else, I want to thank the EPA for this decision. I support this decision.

I work as a registered nurse on the cancer ward at Benedictine Hospital in Kingston.

And I see every day the devasation that cancer brings to families and individuals in that facility.

Now, it does not take the proverbial rocket scientist to figure out that toxic pollutants in the environment raise cancer rates.

Similarly, it does not take a genius to deduce that removing the pollutants will improve the overall health of the river.

When a person has cancer, you remove the cancer.

When a river suffers from a toxic

cancer, it should be removed.

Mr. Jack Welch at General Electric and EPA, you are now morally bound to do you civic duty and clean up the PCBs, get them out of the food chain.

We all live downstream from GE. We want to be able to eat the fish and re-open the fisheries safely.

History will judge you, Mr. Welch, Mr. B, and Mr. Haggard, by the actions you take.

And I honestly do not know how those three gentlemen sleep at night.

Thank you.

(Applause.)

MR. CASPE: The next speaker is Mark Searle.

MR. SEARLE: My name is Mark Searle. I am the secretary of the Mid-Hudson Chapter of Trout Unlimited, an international conservation organization of over 150,000 members dedicated to the restoration and administration of America's cold water fisheries.

And the Mid-Hudson Chapter in Dutchess County is the most active organization

relative to securing access to fishable waters in Dutchess County.

The EPA's decision to dredge the PCBs from the Hudson River exemplifies the foresight and solid science of the agency.

We cannot allow our agencies to be persuaded by the myoptic words of GE or those who are supported by GE, like Representative Sweeney.

We have to look to the future. Long after all of us in this room are dead and gone, there will be a Hudson River.

It is that river, the river of the future that we must attend to, not the river of our lifetimes.

We must consider that we do not own the Hudson River. Rather, we are simply its stewards at this moment in time.

While the river that Henry Hudson sailed on many years ago will never be seen again, we can take some positive action to revitalize the river by removing the PCBs deposited there.

Specifically, the party that caused the PCBs to be present in the river must be

held accoutable for their actions in the removal of the PCBs.

Thanks.

(Applause.)

MR. CASPE: Henry Matthews?

(No response.)

MR. CASPE: Mike Elder?

(No response.)

MR. CASPE: The next speaker is Richard Lazaran.

MR. LAZARAN: My name is Richard Lazaran. I live in Accord, New York, in Ulster County.

I work in Kingston, New York, along the Hudson River.

For the record, I support your decision to drege and remove the PCBs from the Hudson River.

Now that I have said that, I would like to just say that this is more than a scientific and environmental issue. This is also a political issue.

This will take political will to make this a reality.

Everyone needs to understand this.

General Electric is certainly well financed, and is conducting a public relations campaign.

As we all know, public relations through advertisements and such shapes public opinion.

We will open our wallets and support those environmental groups that are countering GE's campaign so that we can support their efforts to publicize the truth.

Earlier this evening, I watched Congressman Sweeney on the Albany news.

And all I can say to Congressman Sweeney is that he should register as a lobbyist for General Electric --

(Applause.)

MR. LAZARAN: I have a message for Jack Welch: We will boycott your products. We will poison your good name as you have poisoned our river.

We need to become stockholders and become disruptors.

We need to become shareholders in airlines and press them not to buy GE products.

We need to press our hospitals not to

buy GE medical equipment.

We need to pass up GE light bulbs, the VCRs, the refrigerators, department store charge cards.

We need to convince GE that it would be cheaper in the long run to clean up the river than to withstand a public boycott of their products.

Thank you.

(Applause.)

MR. CASPE: The next speaker is Dr. Ed Weber.

DR. WEBER: Ed Weber, W-e-b-e-r, of Poughkeepsie.

I spent the last 40 years boating and swimming in the river.

I think spending hundreds of millions of dollars to dredge the river is a mistake.

Why do I think that?

I do not believe the EPA stories any more than I believe GE's.

I think the possibility of making matters worse instead of better is high.

You might ask why I believe that. I have seen too many times in the past where the

studies are done that show whomever is pushing something will get the result they want, whether it's the EPA's interest in the bureaucracy or GE's interest in spending less money.

So, it is not clear to me that it is a good idea.

I think that is all I wanted to say at this point.

(Applause.)

MR. CASPE: The next speaker is Fred Rowe?

(No response.)

MR. CASPE: The next speaker is the Reverend Joseph Parrish.

REVEREND PARRISH: I drove here from Elizabeth, New Jersey, where I am part of the Ridgefield Contamination Team that represents communities of New York and New Jersey.

We have a similar high PCB problem in the Newark Bay and Passaic River.

And we have found that dredging the Bay and landfilling simply produces high levels of PCBs in the air.

Research out of the New York State

University in Oswego has shown that, when you take samples of these dredge spoils and dry them out within 24 hours, 75 percent of the PCBs are immediately released.

It has been reconfirmed by the Louisiana State University, in studies by the Army Corps of Engineers.

And we feel that this idea of off-site landfilling is absolutely ludicrous.

So, we vehemently disagree with this idea of taking material into any kind of dewatering process, moving it anywhere, landfilling it anywhere.

There are a few technologies that are currently at a high scale of capacity in Kearney, New Jersey; they are all effective in different ways.

Some of them produce bricks which, through a thermal process, remove the PCBs completely.

Another, through a shock-wave process with a centrifuge technique, removes the PCBs separately so that the PCBs can be separated from the dredge spoils.

And other methods have also been

tested by Westinghouse's glassification of the dredge spoils that produce sort of a black glassene type product, which also no longer contain the PCBs.

The problem of disposing of the PCBs has not been anywhere nearly completely handled by this alternative.

And we just vehemently think it is not the way to go, and that you need to re-think what the end site will be.

Thank you.

(Applause.)

MR. CASPE: I would just clarify that while we have priced this out under the landfilling alternative, we are also looking at recycling.

And we are communicating with the other end of EPA very closely, and we are considering some possibilities of what else could be done with these wastes that might make a useful product out of it.

So, it is an option. It is something that will be looked at during the design period.

We have got three years to decide.

REVEREND PARRISH: When you talked about sealed freight cars, that seemed to be the level of the thinking at this point.

And I think you have got to get much beyond more sophisticated than that before you start this process because, once you get it out of the water and the waters are drying out, you are creating a hazardous product that millions of people are going to be breathing.

MR. CASPE: The water would be dried out at a dewatering facility --

REVEREND PARRISH: And then it will go into the air. You cannot have a totally contained facility.

So, you are dealing with a human hazard here of enormous proportions.

So, I am just saying that we have to study this.

We have been working on this project for seven years in New Jersey as well as New York City, and that is not the way to go.

I have more detailed written comments; I am not really sure what to do with these.

MR. CASPE: We will take them. Thank

you.

Next is Richard Schiafo.

MR. SCHIAFO: Richard Schiafo.

I would just like to reiterate a couple of points that were made earlier, particularly with respect to the design phase.

We believe the design phase is going to need to be accelerated, particularly due to numbers you guys have put up as to the health risks.

This is a public health emergency, as far as we see it, on the Hudson River.

We need to accelerate that phase so we can get the PCBs removed from the Hudson River in a more accelerated time frame; also, particularly in light of the early action that you guys considered back in 1998, and you felt that that might be necessary.

So, I think we need to look at -- I know how hard you guys have been working just to get this plan out and some of this stuff incorporated in this project, the details that have to go into these kinds of things.

But we need to look at how we can accelerate the plan.

The other point I wanted to make concerned a point that was made in terms of getting information out.

I know you guys have worked hard, and the public meetings you have had on this has been unprecedented.

In terms of peer review and other things, it has been unprecedented on the Hudson; so has your attempt to get the word out to the public.

But we still need to see more. Scenic Hudson and some other groups want to help you do that to get the truth out about dredging technologies.

And we want people to know that this can be accomplished safely.

In a brief conversation with one of the GE folks at the break, he said he wanted one of these t-shirts and he supports a clean Hudson River.

And I said, "Well, you know, you have to support cleaning the Upper Hudson River."

And he said, "Well, we are not going to dredge. We are going to destroy the Hudson River by dredging."

And that is the mentality of their ad campaign.

And we have to work to get the information out that EPA and groups like Scenic Hudson and Clearwater are not going to advocate something that is going to destroy the river.

Thanks.

(Applause.)

MR. CASPE: The next speaker is Glen Burger.

MR. BURGER: Glen Burger, B-u-r-g-e-r, representing Dutchess Greens.

I will keep it short. I would just like to say that I have a degree in Biology, and I support the science and the hard work.

Science is not exact but, as human beings, we try to do the best we can.

And I appreciate all the hard work that everyone at EPA has done.

And there were a lot of good things that were said, so I will leave it at that.

Thank you very much.

(Applause.)

MR. CASPE: That was the last speaker from the cards, but I know there was at least

one of you who wanted to say something.

MR. HVAL: My name is David Hval, H-v-a-l.

And the minister who just spoke about airborne PCBs reminded me that it is my understanding that the PCBs showed up in the Arctic or Hudson Bay -- were they airborne? So, that is a valid complaint.

Also, I was pretty shocked when I saw -- I think it was Alison who said the plan was going to cost $460 million.

And I thought, "Well, gee, that is not very much."

I wondered how you arrived at that plan as opposed to the more extensive dredging.

Did you tell us that and I missed it?

MR. CASPE: I think we probably skimmed over it a little bit.

We looked at a variety of different things.

One thing is that we looked at the response of the fish. We looked to see how much benefit we were getting.

As was said at the beginning, the name of the game here is the level of the PCBs

in the fish; that is what is driving this remedy.

So, we looked to see how we could effect those levels in the fish.

We looked at a more expensive remedy, and we found that we got very little gain for a lot more disruption of the river bottom and a lot more material at a lot more cost. And the gain was very slight.

We looked at other things. We said, "Well, what about erosion?"

We looked at certain areas. We found that certain areas were really not subject to erosion; they were not going to erode.

So, we looked at a variety of different things, and that is how we refined it down to this plan.

We looked at all these different factors, and we looked at it hot-spot-by-hot-spot or, if you prefer, area-by-area.

We looked to try and understand that and to maximize the benefit and minimize disruption.

MR. HVAL: Well, I would urge you to try and dredge as extensively as you can.

We who live here would like there to be no PCBs in the river.

Secondly, I was wondering if any of you all would speculate on what the new Administration might mean to this program.

MR. CASPE: Let me just say this.

We have taken -- we spent a long time with this study; some of you probably think a lot too long.

Our science, we believe, is really pretty damn good at this stage.

We have taken the extra steps to dot every "i", cross every "t", and then have it peer-reviewed by independent scientists.

So, I think our science is real good. Our science leads us to the conclusions -- to the remedy we put forward here.

In a new Administration, I mean, certainly, people are entitled to ask questions, and obviously they will as previous Administrations asked questions.

And I think we have the answer. I would imagine that good science, good engineering and the right thing will prevail and we will carry on from there.

MR. HVAL: Thank you.

(Applause.)

MR. CASPE: Yes, sir?

DR. SEYMOUR: Dr. Gary Seymour, Hudson Valley Wildlife out of Newburgh on the Hudson.

Hudson Valley Wildlife has followed the controversial debate on the targeted dredging versus natural self-restoration.

And whether the river is left to self-heal or the likely event that the preferred alternative is installed, there are several technologies which are important enhancements in addition to either decision in procedure.

A scientific project, enlisting biologists and botanists, could segregate, manage and monitor these hot spots.

An underwater crop species would be selected and planted, species of plant systems which would attract and uptake the toxic material from the river bottom.

The crops would be managed, harvested, evaluated and stabilized for transport.

Hudson Valley Wildlife feels that additional technologies should be incorporated to safeguard and enhance the restoration of the Hudson River.

Please keep your mind open to utilizing these channels of scientific projects.

With either decision, it is very, very important to the community how the procedures are taken care of following that.

Thank you.

(Applause.)

MR. CASPE: I will state that we did investigate hydrobotanical remediation, growing plants. There were studies that we did look at, but we did not get significant PCB uptake through those plants.

But we have studied that, and that is withiin the Feasibility Study.

Is that correct, Alison?

MS. HESS: Yes.

MR. CASPE: There was a 5,000-page study that was put out.

If you look in there and you are interested, you will find some analysis of

hydroremediation.

Is there anybody else who wishes to speak at this time?

(No response.)

MR. CASPE: Thank you.

This is the first of many meetings. Thank you for coming.

(Whereupon, the Public Meeting was concluded at 10:25 o'clock p.m.)

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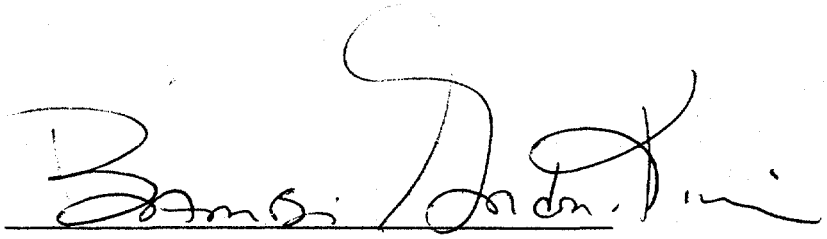
CERTIFICATION

I, BAMBI GORDON-KIMM, a Certfied Court Reporter, do hereby certify that I recorded stenographically the proceedings herein at the time and place noted in the heading hereof, and that the foregoing is an accurate and complete transcript of same to the best of my knowledge and ability.



BAMBI GORDON-KIMM, CVR

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