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HAVERSTRAW COMMUNITY CENTER

HAVERSTRAW, NEW YORK

Public Meeting on EPA's Proposed Plan to Clean Up the PCB Contamination in the Upper Hudson River

Friday, February 9, 2001

AGENDA

Opening Remarks by Congressman Benjamin Gilman

Welcome: ANN RYCHLENSKI, Communications Division, USEPA

Overview: RICHARD CASPE, Director Superfund Division, USEPA

DOUG TOMCHUK, Project Manager, USEPA

Public Comments and Q&A

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MAYOR WASSMER: Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. My name is Bud Wassmer. I'm the mayor of the Village of Haverstraw. I want to welcome everyone here to our community center. We're very pleased to host this meeting.

As you may know the Village of Haverstraw is at the widest part of the Hudson, and we have on the table right now a major waterfront project where we will reclaim old industrial brown fields, open up over two miles of walking paths right on the river's edge, install fishing piers and create a beautiful park-like atmosphere.

We realize that the Hudson River is a tremendous asset to our community. We want to see it and our environment clean for us, for our children and for our grandchildren.

I want to tip my hat to Congressman Gilman for bringing this meeting to our village. He's done a wonderful job for our community and for Rockland County. Without further adieu, I give you our Congressman, Ben Gilman.

(Applause.)

CONGRESSMAN GILMAN: Thank you. Thank you, Mayor. Good evening, ladies and gentlemen, and our EPA representatives. I want to take this opportunity, first of all, to thank our representatives from the Environmental Protection Agency and all of you who have taken the time to participate this evening in a very important forum.

Let me introduce our EPA representatives who are here. Ann Rychlenski, Public Affairs Specialist for EPA. Richard Caspe, Director of Superfund Division, EPA Region 2. He's got a few problems on his shoulders, trying to clean up our areas. Doug Tomchuk, Project Manager of EPA, do you go.

And now we will proceed with an open forum. I'll take just a moment to try to relate to you our important mission tonight.

As many of you are aware, during a 30-year period, commencing in 1977, PCBs were discharged into the Hudson River from two

General Electric capacitor manufacturing plants that are located up in Fort Edward and Hudson Falls, New York. As a result of their manufacturing, many of GE's PCBs today remain concentrated in various hot spots in the sediments of the upper Hudson.

In 1983 a 200-mile stretch of the Hudson River, from Hudson Falls to the Battery of New York City, was classified as a Superfund site, which then put it in the jurisdiction of the EPA.

In 1984 EPA made an interim no-action decision for the PCB-contaminated sediments, and since 1990 the agency has been conducting a reassessment of that 1984 decision. In December of this past year the EPA offered its preferred remedy for the Hudson River PCBs Superfund site. Its proposed plan consists of targeted dredging of some 2.65 million cubic yards of contaminated sediment that contains over 100,000 pounds of PCBs from the upper Hudson River. Up until April 17th of this year, 2001, EPA will be accepting public comment on

its proposed plan for cleaning up the Hudson. The final decision will substantially impact the future of our entire Hudson River valley area.

Accordingly, in coordination with the EPA, I am hosting the town hall meeting for all of you in the 20th Congressional District so that we all may learn more about the proposed EPA plan and have the opportunity to make some suggestions, have some input, ask appropriate questions, and give formal comment on preferred targeted dredging remedies. We look forward to hearing from your friends at EPA as well as all the comments and questions of the many of you who are assembled here tonight.

Joining us tonight from the EPA, as I mentioned, is the public affairs specialist Ann Rychlenski, who I introduced earlier, Richard Caspe again, our Director of the Superfund Division and Doug Tomchuk, Project Manager. Allison Hess, Project Manager, Marian Olsen, Environmental Scientist and Doug Fischer, counsel, are also with us

tonight.

At this time I would like to turn the floor over to Ann Rychlenski from the EPA who will discuss the agenda for this evening and outline the procedures that we'll be following. Ann, thank you.

MS. RYCHLENSKI: Thank you, Congressman Gilman, and thank you for having us here tonight.

Very quickly, so that we can get on with our program, as Congressman Gilman mentioned, we are taking public comment on our proposed plan, and that public comment is being taken here tonight. We have a court reporter here, so I'm going to ask any of you that have questions or comments to please come up to the microphone. We'll call you up, those of you who have signed in on the index cards. If there is anyone here that wants to come to the microphone to ask a question or give a comment, please fill out an index card in the back, and you'll get called up in the order that the cards were received.

When you do come up, please speak your name clearly and just tell us where you're from so that we can get a good record of the proceedings tonight. If you want to give written comment tonight, you can. We have comment boxes in the back, large index cards that you could fill out. Again, whatever your opinion may be, if you want to fill it in, please do so, and just put your name and where you're from on there so we can keep a record. If you want to send your comments into EPA, you can do so.

I hope that you've all taken the handouts that we have out there in the back of the room. There is a whole slew of them. Please take one of everything, including the proposed plan. And in the proposed plan -- that's the larger document that's out there, kind of a light blue -- that is the one that has all of the information in there, if you want to send your comments, and if you want more information about this project, we have a website, our website is at www.epa.gov/Hudson Hudson, and I hope you'll

avail yourselves of that.

This evening Richard is going to talk about the project itself and what our proposal is. And then we are going to go to the audience and get questions and comments. We ask that you keep your comments and questions brief so that all your neighbors can get to the mic and just keep an eye on Doug there at the end. If you go over your time too much, Doug will start waving a little yellow or red sign at you to let you know that it is time to wrap it up.

Without further adieu, I'm going to turn this over to Rich.

MR. CASPE: I usually did do this from behind a lectern, and I'm going to do it up here this time. It will be a little bit different for me, but it we should be all right. This is the seventh public meeting that we have had since December 12th when we announced our plan to remediate the Hudson River.

I would like to start off by giving you a little refresher on the site and what

we've proposed. So if we start with the first slide, as Congressman said, it is a 200-mile site. It goes basically from Fort Edward in the upper around 40 miles above the federal dam in Troy on down to the battery in New York City. The study area that we looked at intensively was the top 40 miles, that upper Hudson River, above the Troy dam.

Next slide, please, Doug.

The reason we did that is because that's where most of the contamination sits, in a fairly hot spot type setting. There's contamination in the lower river certainly, and that's washed out through the years, but that's very disperse; whereas, we have 40 hot spots estimated within the upper river. We have divided, for study stake, into three sections. The first section is the most contaminated; it is what we call the Thompson Island Pool. It goes from Fort Edward on down to the Thomson Island Dam. There are 40 historic hot spots that New York State DEC identified many years ago; 20 of those hot spots lie in the first section. It is

roughly six miles long. The second section is around five miles long and 15 of the hot spots lie within it. And the last section is 29 miles long, and five of the remaining hot spots lie within it. So it is 40 miles that we have done an intensive study.

In doing the study, the study took ten years. Some people have said we've rushed to conclusions. Ten years isn't much of a rush. If you look at it, what have we learned? Well, we have learned and we know that PCBs have serious health impacts. We know that over 1 million pounds of PCBs were discharged by General Electric company into the river. We know that we have unacceptable fish contamination, certainly in the upper 40 miles, and below that as well. In the upper 40 miles we have fish contaminations which we estimate at over a hundred times the acceptable levels. We know that people are eating the fish despite fish consumption advisories. New York State Department of Health -- actually the last survey that was done in 1996 -- and that's not in the lower

Hudson, that's in the upper Hudson where there's a complete fish consumption advisory to eat none. Six of ten people that were interviewed in fact had fish in their possession, which is -- I think I got that wrong on the six. It is a little bit less than that. One out of six, I'm sorry. One out of six had fish in their possession, and one out of twelve roughly had more than one fish in their possession. We know that birds and animals are continuing to eat the fish.

We measured the PCBs, and I'll go over this in a little bit more detail in section one from when they flow into that section from the upper river and they flow out of that section, and we know that by the time they flow out the PCB levels in the water itself are over three times greater than they were when they came in. And the only place it could be coming from is the sediment. So we know that as well. We know that there's also a source upstream; that there is a General Electric facility at Hudson Falls and that that facility continues

to leak through the fractured bedrock below it some PCBs into the river, and that has to be taken care of as well. We know that. That's part of the plan as well. We know that PCBs are in the water and fish, and we don't see significant improvement recently.

We know that PCBs are not being buried uniformly within the river. There have been some who have said that the river is depositional and everything is being buried over. We know that's not the case. We know that most of the PCBs, despite what some might say, are not buried deep. They are in the top nine inches. We find that the highest -- in 60 percent of the cores that we took through the sediment, the highest levels of PCBs found were in the top nine inches. We know that there are over 500 pounds of PCBs a year flowing over the Troy dam into the lower Hudson. And we know that we have good science behind all of the information I just told you because we peer reviewed this. We brought in independent scientists from around the world who had nothing to do with

EPA, had nothing to do with anybody who had a stake in this. We had five panels; they reviewed all six of our reports. The cost to us in order to bring these people in from all around the world was over a half a million dollars. So we put a lot of effort into making sure there was a strong independent scientific peer review. We know that.

So this all led us to a proposed plan. I would like to go over briefly what the proposed plan is. The proposed plan includes targeted dredging. We call it targeted, because in fact, if you look at the area -- and I'll show that with some slides a little later, within that 40 miles, you see 2.65 million cubic yards. That's a lot of dredging. Yes, it is. It's lot of material. But if you look at a 40-mile stretch of river, which is four to six hundred feet wide, it is really not that much. In fact the areas we are dredging are less than 13 percent of the total bottom area within that area. So it is actually very targeted. The targeted dredging that we

looked at in the uppermost area where we have the greatest contamination we are basically removing the hot pots and a little more; we call that expanded hot spot remediation. In the second, which is the next most contaminated, 15 of the 20 we are basically removing the hot spots. And then in the last 29-mile area, we look at those five remaining hot spots, and some of those in fact appeared to be depositional. It did not appear that they were in areas where there really is no concern environmentally. So some we chose not to remove, whereas others we thought there was erosional possibilities certainly we are asking to remove. So it is 2.65 million cubic yards that it comes to. It's over 100,000 pounds, that's over 50 tons of PCBs that we would expect to remove. And again it is targeted; I say 500 of 3900 acres.

If I could just show you some maps and give you a sense. On the left is the first dredge; it goes from Fort Edward, where the old dam was, basically down to the

Thompson Island Dam. And the red, the red depicts where we are dredging. You can see there's a lot of red in that first six miles, so there's a lot of dredging going on in that first six miles. That's where the majority of it is going on. If you look at the second part, right-hand side, which is the next five miles down to that dam in Northumberland, you see a lot less red because there wasn't as much of an impact on fish and other items. We're doing less work there. Then if you look at the last 29 miles and scan it quickly, you'll see just how little red there actually is. So if you look at that you can kind of see that it really is targeted. When you say 2.65 million, people say how can that be targeted? Again, you have to look at the universe you're looking at. As part of the proposal, there's no local landfill. All of the material is going to be removed from the Hudson Valley. It will be dewatered at facilities; there will be one on the north end of the site and someplace on the south end of the site, and it will be dewatered,

stabilized and shipped by rail out of the area, out of the Hudson Valley. The river will be kept open to navigation throughout all of this. And if that means that we have to widen the navigational channels in some places while doing the work, we are going to. In fact, the little over two and a half cubic yards that I mentioned, over 300,000 of those cubic yards in fact are navigational improvements or navigational dredging items that we'll be doing as far as keeping the channels open in order to make sure that we don't impede anybody's progress up or down river. Rail transport. No trucks. We are talking about rail to take the material out. We take it out on rail cars. It will be roughly 45 rail cars a day. That would be a total between the north and south end.

We will be using environmental dredging techniques, and we also would, after we dredge, be bringing in clean material, roughly a million cubic yards of clean material to rebuild the bottom substrate so that the bottom will revegetate and the

bottom will stay stable. We use environmental dredging techniques. After we get done with this, the way we expect it is that August we would finalize a decision. If the decision is to move forward, we then would take three years to design to get the access, to set all the details of this plan in motion, and then it would be five years to actually construct it.

What I didn't mention is part of the dredging also is aimed at down river impacts as well. We estimate that roughly 500 pounds of PCBs flow over the Troy dam every day, and our estimate is that by doing this dredging we can take 40 percent of that less. So 200-pound reduction in the flow over the dam; we can not get it down really much more below that. But we think that within reason we can certainly remove 200 pounds a year of PCBs that flow over that dam. I may have said per day earlier, it is 500 pounds a year and 200 pounds a year that we would be able to eliminate.

Again, the comment period closes on

April 17th. We've had six meetings so far. We have had one in Saratoga, two in Poughkeepsie, one in New York City and then this week we have done the Albany, Hudson Falls, Haverstraw circuit. I would like to briefly, before we pick up, just respond to some of the issues that have come up so far.

The first one is the PCB toxicity. There are those that have said that that PCBs are not toxic. I would like to clarify that PCBs are known carcinogens in lab animals and they are probable causes in humans as well. And that's not just EPA speaking. Major international and national health organizations agree. Those include the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences, The National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health, The World Health Organization and others. PCBs, besides cancer, also cause other illnesses. They cause low birth weights, learning and memory problems, thyroid disease and immunological deficiencies. We were pleased that the National Academy of Sciences in a

recent report, that was actual ordereded by Congress, to see whether EPA was on the right track or not came out with basically the same statements as EPA. I'll read this. Exposure to PCBs may result in chronic-- e.g., cancer, immunological, developmental, reproductive, neurological-- effects in humans and/or wildlife. Therefore, the committee considers the presence of PCBs in sediments may pose long term public health and ecosystem risks.

That is what EPA believes as well. We were very happy to hear them come out with the same statement. I believe I have copies of all of the National Academy of Sciences recommendations and conclusions from their executive summary out back, if you'd like to read them.

We are concerned, on the other hand, that the public might be listening to some of the rhetoric that has been recently brought to bear as far as PCBs don't cause any problems. We are very concerned about that, and we just want to reiterate that people should clearly stick to the state

health advisories as they relate to consumption of fish in the Hudson River and certainly the eat none advisory above the Troy dam.

Next thing I would like to mention is some people have spoken about using fish consumption advisories as a long-term management tool, and that is -- well, why dredge the river, why not just stop eating the fish? There's two reasons. One is that it basically writes off a natural resource, which is not the type of thing we do. And the second thing -- and maybe most important -- is it ignores reality. Reality is that people are eating the fish. They are eating the fish, and fishing for a variety of reasons, recreational, cultural or subsistence reasons as an important food source. The reality is what I mentioned before. That one in six had fish in their possession. What were they doing with that? They were not taking that fish home I don't think to look at. You know, so they were bringing it home for themselves and for their

families. That is reality. So that doesn't really work.

I mentioned the National Academy of Sciences study, and again, as that was being done, there was a lot of discussion that EPA was going to learn things there and we were all going to learn that EPA's proposal was not correct. I think what they came out with from our perspective is a very close -- it is almost like a study guide to be used to see what we did actually in the Hudson River from our perspective. So please read it and look at that yourself.

The next thing is PCB levels in water. People talk about the water in the upper Hudson River where it is most contaminated, and they say that's 90 percent reduction in the last 20 years. Well, if you look, it is true there has been a 90 percent reduction in the last 20 years. Those are dates down there. And what you find out is that -- this is around 1985 over here, so since 1985, the levels have actually been steady. All the decline occurred early.

Why did it occur when it occurred? Well, it occurred for a few reasons. This is 1977, the damage was removed in 1973 when the dam was removed; you get like a mud wave moving down the river. So the river bottom was unstable. You would expect some problems going on there. PCBs were legally discharged until 1977, so there were ongoing discharges in the river in this period as well that had to be dealt with. And navigational dredging was being performed in the area till 1979. So you had a variety of things stirring up the bottom in that period that were, if you want to say, unnatural. Since 1970 that has then stabilized, and if you look at 1985 and you look through all those years, it is pretty level.

Next thing I would talk about is fish. People talk about the levels in fish have come down. The point I would make is you can always find a data point that can make any point you want to make, that can prove any point you want to prove. So you have to look at all the data points. You

have to look at all the species. You have to look at all the locations, and you have to recognize what your data points mean. You have to look at and see, well, how much fish is making up this sample, and I put a point on a map on a graph and I say this is a number. Is it an average of 60 fish or is it an average of six fish? How much variability goes in those efficiencies makes a lot of difference. Based upon that you draw a statistical data point, data bars around your points to see, well, it might have been up here, down there. Again, if you look at these data points, this is for black bass, large mouth bass in the Stillwater Pool, which is that lower 29 miles of the river. It is the cleanest part of the river, in that area anyway. And if you look at it again, here is that drop early on, and look at what happened since then. It has been very steady. If you go to the next slide, this is brown bullhead, brown bullhead, that's catfish, all in Stillwater Pool. Again, you see that drop; pretty level since then. Then

move upriver, going to the Thompson Island Pool. You notice a little jump here. The reason there's a jump in here is there was a catastrophic release into the Hudson River from what's called the Alan Mill in 1991 which brought fish levels up until it was controlled, or more or less controlled in 1993. So you see a little bit of blip going up and down, but if you look over all, before the blip and after the blip, it is about the same.

And here is the catfish again in the Thompson Island Pool. You kind of see the same thing. There may be a slight declining trend here, but really not much. So if you look at this, you realize that that's why we believe that levels in fish have not been decreasing.

Next, visible improvements. People say, But look how the river has gotten so much prettier, so much nicer. It is improved, you know, the river is healing itself. River isn't healing itself. First of all, you don't see PCBs in the sediment

and you don't see PCBs in the fish. What you do see is you see bacterial problems in the river. And if you go back to the '70s, when people go back and think historically, they think of when we had raw sewage going into the river, you know, we had primary sewage treatment plants, raw sewage. I remember in this community here, I worked with this community in building a sewage treatment plant I guess in the '70s, an upgraded sewage treatment plant. And certainly that's true in the upper river as well. In the upper river alone, above Troy, you know, the number is 200 million dollars of investment by municipalities, by the state and by the federal government that helped the river look better. That's what made the river look better. The river didn't heal itself. People say, Well, source control is the answer. Yet some people would argue let GE just control the source at the Hudson Falls facility and that's all that has to be done. Well, we look at that. That is an important aspect. It has to be done. I would just

point that the discharge of that is three ounces a day into the river from that facility. The discharge from the sediments up into the water as the water flows over that Thompson Island Pool is between one and one and a half pounds a day. It is around six times greater than the discharges coming out of that plant. And how do we know that? That's a picture of the Hudson Falls facility. The way we know that is we did fingerprinting and what fingerprinting is is that PCBs actually aren't just PCBs. There's all different kinds that have to do with how many rings they have and how many chlorines they have and so on and so forth. So there are different kinds of PCBs. So what we did is tried to fingerprint it. We looked at this, the blue is what the PCBs look like coming in at Rogers Island into the upper river and the red is what the PCBs look like as they flow over the Thompson Island dam. And if you look at the two here, you notice that this kind of goes up. This is lower than this. This is higher. This isn't a

very good match. So if you're trying to fingerprint this and you said, well, you know does the up river discharge control what's coming out? You kind of look and say no, because the fingerprints don't really match. Let me now show the next slide which shows the sediment compared to what comes out, and notice just how carefully that fingerprint matches. That's why we feel very strongly that the PCBs over the dam are in fact from the sediment.

The next thing I guess I would like to do is just talk so you get to the big question over and over. We go through all of this and we come to the conclusion certainly that remediation is required. To us these are very compelling reasons that something has to be done. The river is not healing itself. It's not going to heal itself. We have to go forward with something. We believe we can go forward with something. We can make the fish safer; we can reduce the load again coming down into the lower river. We can reduce the levels in fish rather

dramatically and rather quickly, and we can bring fish back to a point where state consumption advisories can be relaxed to some degree. At least one to two generations earlier, if not sooner. And so we get to the last of the 64 thousand dollar question I guess, and that's dating me I guess, as far as the upriver people certainly, and that is: Is the cure worse than the disease? Will dredging cause more problems than it will solve? We believe the answer is a clear no.

One of the things that people talk to us about is that we are going to -- even in that Thompson Island Pool for example, we are going to have so many vessels dredging that you're going to be able to walk across the river without ever touching the water. So what we did -- that's hard to see, but what we did is we put every dredge we could possibly put, every vessel we could possibly put for worst case-scenario into the upper two and a half miles of the river to see what it would look like, and we drew it to scale. And this is what it would look like. These

are the dredging routes, four dredges operating. And if you look -- you can see how much open river there is and how little impact there really is. The next thing I would say is that we also -- people upriver seem to believe that dredges will be operating in front of their facilities for months and years. The truth of the matter is they'll be operating in front of their areas for days and weeks. That within weeks at the most dredges would move and would no longer be in front of people's properties.

I guess what I would like to do now, another issue that was raised -- Mel, is the video ready? I would like to show you one of the things that we are going to destroy the bottom of the river. I would like to take a minute to just look. Let me explain this. There is a site, General Motors site up in Messina New York on the St. Lawrence River. What happened there is we did dredging, and there we didn't try to restore the bottom, as I mentioned here, with clean backfill. We put basically a cobble

cap down to try to control it. So we didn't take any steps to restore the river. And people say, well, once you rip the river up, it is going to be destroyed, the ecosystem is destroyed. I would like to show you what the bottom of the river looks like three years after dredging. That's what this shows. There's a diver doing this. If you don't see fish, you got to remember that fish swim away from divers. Although there is a fish in here someplace I know. Well, it is hard to see, but what you're looking at here is pretty lush growth on the bottom. You can see how it has grown back after three years. This is not an EPA video. It was taken by a diver. It is not the fanciest thing in the world, but what it shows is that the discussion about the bottom being destroyed and not rehabitating itself is really baseless.

Our opinion is that environmental dredging really works. I would get into one other issue. Somebody says, well, are you going to have resuspension; as you dredge are

you going to be kicking up PCBs? We ran estimates. We estimate that by our dredging every year that we dredge we can reduce, because we're taking PCBs out, the load over the Troy dam that moves down river by a minimum of 40 pounds a year. We estimate that resuspension under the worst circumstance, with no controls in place would be 20 pounds a year. So if you take the 40 pounds that we are reducing and subtract the 20 pounds that we could under the worst circumstance be adding as a temporary construction item, you still would wind up with a 20-pound reduction every year. That is a very, very conservative estimate in our opinion. I know that's probably a concern of people here, and it has been a concern that's been raised throughout. So we don't see any short-term impacts that would actually increase PCB loads in the river. Although I will say also that we will put extra monitoring on all the water supplies coming out of the river, with contingency plans.

I guess just to wrap up, I would

say we have been listening to people. Again this is the seventh meeting, and we've heard a lot. We don't have all the answers. We've got a lot. And we'll have more, but we don't have them all. We've heard about noise concerns that the community upriver will have, odor concerns, the lights on the river from the construction, dust controls. We have even heard about the working hours, how many hours are these dredges going to be working. You can't expect these people to be subjected to six, you know, dredging for 14 hours a day, six days a week. Sound travels over water. All these are true, and we're working on these things. So by August we are going to look at these things and incorporate every change we can to deal with these concerns and then reevaluate to see whether we've done enough. Assuming that we have, at that stage of the game we are going to make a decision to go forward. If we make that decision to go forward, we then have a three-year design period. And people always ask a lot of detailed questions and always

wondering what about this. Where exactly are you going to dewater the facilities? The dredge material? Where exactly are you going to get the backfill from? Where exactly are you going to dispose of the material that you're taking out of the river? All of this comes out at that stage really, the dredging and the detailed design, and actually in the bidding process as well.

That's kind of it. I would add as well that public involvement doesn't add after a record of decision. During the design we certainly will have continued public involvement. We're going to set up a whole detailed way of making sure that the public's concerns were addressed throughout, and that there would be a feedback loop going back and forth once again as more details are available as far as what we believe the answers are and listening to people what they believe the answers aren't, and so on and so forth, going back and forth to get to the right answer. And then during the five-year construction as well we'll have people out at

the site, may have the Army Corps of Engineers overseeing the work for us, so they would have an on-scene presence, and we would have an on-scene presence as well.

With that I hope I've given you my perspective quick and your perspective probably long idea of just where we are and what we're doing. And I would like now to open it up for questions and comments.

CONGRESSMAN GILMAN: Mr. Caspe. Thank you very much, Mr. Caspe. Can you tell us, where will the PCB latent soil which is removed from the Hudson be shipped to? Do you have any plans for that? What would be the destination?

MR. CASPE: The destination will be -- well, we don't know just now because that's a bidding job. There are places and people that make a lot of money taking material like this. Roughly two-thirds of the material is nonhazardous; we expect it to be nonhazardous waste. One third is hazardous waste. We would bid the job out, and people would bid competitively to take

this to various different places. But for pricing the proposal, what we priced it based upon the two-thirds nonhazardous material going up to the Buffalo area, commercial facility there and the other third going to a commercial facility in Texas.

CONGRESSMAN GILMAN: So there are facilities available. What's the danger of PCBs escaping down river during the dredging operation?

MR. CASPE: Again, we don't see that as great concern. We'll take steps to ensure -- we are going to use environmental dredges. We are not using the old clam shells that you would think of. Whether it will be hydraulic dredges or mechanical dredges, they limit resuspension. We will have silt screens around them as well. Even under a worst-case scenario, more would be removed from the river than might escape.

CONGRESSMAN GILMAN: Your targeted area is about a 40-mile stretch is that correct?

MR. CASPE: Yes.

CONGRESSMAN GILMAN: When will you be doing the remainder of the river, any dates for that?

MR. CASPE: We don't plan on doing the remainder. Again, you have to recognize that -- actually let's say around a million and a half or something like that pounds of PCBs have been discharged into the river through time. 200,000 pounds of those PCBs now remain within the upper Hudson River. We can get 100,000 pounds out of that we think practically, in a practical manner. The other 100,000 pounds within that 40-mile stretch are so dispersed we can't get at them. The PCBs in the lower Hudson River are so dispersed, it would be impractical to try to find them or to try to remove them.

CONGRESSMAN GILMAN: What would happen, for example to the PCBs along the Haverstraw shores, in this area?

MR. CASPE: Well, the contribution of PCBs that move down the river from the Troy dam will have reduced by 40 percent, but as there's no dredging that would occur in

the Haverstraw. So eventually they would get better. You know, assume that there are no other discharges of PCBs in the Haverstraw area.

CONGRESSMAN GILMAN: So then you would assume over a period of time it would be a clean area?

MR. CASPE: It would improve. Clean, I'm not sure just how clean. I don't know exactly what the period of time would be. What we're trying to do actually now, there is a model of the lower Hudson River as well, and we are trying to do a little bit more linkage between the upper Hudson River and the lower Hudson River in the next few months where we might be able to predict a little bit better as far as what type of responses we will have in the lower river.

CONGRESSMAN GILMAN: Did your ten-year study include the extent of the PCBs in this part of the river?

MR. CASPE: Not to any great extent. We went down all the way to actually New York harbor in looking at PCBs. Our

estimate there was the PCBs in the harbor sediments, around 50 percent of the PCBs there are associated with the site in the upper 40 miles, and the rest of it is kind of associated with other discharges within the New York area. But that varies as you move up and down the river.

CONGRESSMAN GILMAN: So should there be any concern about toxicity in this part of the river, in the lower Hudson?

MR. CASPE: As far as eating fish, certainly you should be carefully watching the state fish consumption advisories, yes.

CONGRESSMAN GILMAN: Thank you.

MAYOR WASSMER: We in the Village of Haverstraw are concerned that you would choose one of our old industrial sites to dump the dredging material, the dredged material for possible dewatering and so forth. And let me state for the record that we are totally against that. We do not want to see anything dumped on our soil. Also, we are concerned that PCBs that may be raised from the bottom during the dredging procedure

and would wind up in the Village of Haverstraw and Haverstraw Bay, where we do not have as good a flushing action as you may find in other areas of the river.

MR. CASPE: I would just point out again that it is 500 pounds a year of PCBs moving over that dam right now. I would just repeat, there's 500 pounds a year of PCBs flowing over the Troy dam into the lower river. And we estimate that at a minimum for the next ten years we would, after we do the work, we would average around a 40 percent reduction in those PCBs over the dams. That's a 200-pound reduction every year, and we estimate that that reduction would far exceed any potential stirring up at the bottom that might contribute to any type of a discharge over the dam as a result of the construction. And we have done that in the most conservative manner where we assumed basically no controls or no special controls, and we certainly will put special controls on as well. So we hear your concern. We will address it.

MAYOR WASSMER: What are the chances of suspended material reaching Haverstraw Bay? How far does suspended material normally travel before it resettles on the bottom?

MR. TOMCHUK: I think I can answer that one. Actually it settles out very quickly. Any resuspended material from the dredging operation would fall out of the water quickly. It is generally associated with the particles, and they do fall out within hundreds of yards rather than longer distances. And we also do have silt screens as a secondary line of defense if you would, so that the particles hit the silt screen and then fall out, so they do not get transported downstream.

MAYOR WASSMER: And it is my understanding that you will be monitoring both sides of the silk screen?

MR. TOMCHUK: Well, the monitoring really needs to be done on the downstream side. Downstream of that you measure particulate matter in the water to determine

on a live basis to make sure that you're not getting transport downstream, a real-time monitoring program. And then you also do PCB monitoring as well. But there is a turnaround time for that of like a 24-hour turnaround time with an on-site lab.

MAYOR WASSMER: It occurs to me that it might be helpful to us in the lower Hudson Valley if you conducted your dredging operations while the tide is coming in rather than when it's coming out and flowing down towards us. Thank you very much.

MR. CASPE: Thank you. I would just say, obviously where the dredging is occurring, the dredging is occurring in a non-tidal portion of the river. We're above the Troy dam where the dredging is occurring, so that would make that very, very difficult. But we hear your concerns, and I'm sure we can address them.

Okay, Ann, do you have cards?

When your name is called you'll come up here. I'll give you the mic, and it's all yours. Jay Burgess, Scenic Hudson.

MR. JAY BURGESS: Hello. As was stated, my name is Jay Burgess, and I'm with the environmental advocacy group Scenic Hudson. I would like to thank, first of all, the EPA for holding tonight's public hearing and for the others that they have done as part of an exhaustive effort to get public comment on this project. And I'd also like to thank Congressman Gilman for his part in making tonight possible.

General Electric has turned 200 miles of the Hudson River, a national treasure, into a toxic waste dump. PCBs have been shown to be a threat to human health, a threat to our families, our children, and to our communities. We deserve to have the Hudson River cleaned, and General Electric has a responsibility to clean up the mess that it created. The EPA has done a tremendous amount of science, peer review, objective science that has been demonstrated to be accurate and correct. It's plan is appropriate, and can be done effectively and safely.

And I would like to conclude by saying that I think it's time for the world's richest and most powerful corporation to stop putting millions of dollars into a propaganda campaign and to put its money behind a solution to this problem.

(Applause.)

If they want to live up to their corporate tag line and bring something good to the lives of people in the Hudson Valley, they'll clean up these toxics from our river and give us back what we all deserve. Thank you.

MR. CASPE: Kris Edwards.

MS. KRIS EDWARDS: Hi, my name is Kris Edwards. I work for River Keepers, but I'm a resident of Rockland County, and I want to thank you for being here this evening, and I want to just say that we do have a clear and present problem here. And I think tonight we've heard a solution, and I just want to speak in favor of the solution. Thank you.

MR. CASPE: Thank you. Jeff Casaletto.

MR. JEFF CASALETTO: My name is Jeff Casaletto. I'm from the Pace Environmental Litigation Clinic in White Plains. The following comments are being submitted on behalf of the Hudson River Keepers. The River Keepers is a non-profit environmental group based in Garrison, New York whose mission is to safeguard the ecological integrity of the Hudson River watershed as well as the New York City drinking water supply watershed.

River Keeper strongly endorses the EPA's preliminary decision to force cleanup of the upper Hudson River. The plan would utilize environmental dredging techniques in targeted areas considered to be hot spots. Such dredging has proven to be effective in other remediation projects around the country. While we support the EPA's proposed plan, River Keepers would prefer the more comprehensive alternative number five, which would remove the largest amount of PCBs from the river. In addition, River Keepers would ask EPA to specify hydraulic dredging to the

greatest extent possible, since this type of suction removal appears to be the most efficient and effective technology available.

GE's multiillion dollars public relations lobbying and litigation campaign is a flagrant attempt to mislead the public as to the status of recovery of the Hudson River ecosystem and the impacts that dredging would have on local communities. Moreover, GE's campaign is morally reprehensible in that it seeks to avoid taking responsibility for the cleanup of an ecosystem that it has singlehandedly crippled.

GE reports a thriving catch and release system as evidence that the river and surrounding communities are prospering. However, current fish advisories recommend that women of child bearing age and children under 15 should not eat any fish from any part of the Hudson River south of the Hudson Falls.

The Hudson River has undergone a remarkable transformation over the past 30 years thanks to the efforts of the

environmental groups and local citizens throughout the Hudson Valley, along with the passage and enforcement of environmental laws such as the Clean Water Act. However, until the PCBs are removed from the river, the full restoration of the Hudson and thus the safe and unfettered use of all its aesthetic and recreational resources will be deprived for generations to come.

It has been said environmentists wanted to see GE punished. This is not the case. The reality is the residents of the Hudson Valley, through no fault of their own, are the ones punished. Now we are simply looking to EPA to enforce this nation's environmental laws, and if that means to GE shelling out half a billion dollars to clean up the mess it created, then so be it. Thank you.

MR. CASPE: Next speaker is Karl S. Coplan.

MR. KARL COPLAN: My name is Karl Coplan. I wear a lot of hats on this issue, since I'm on the board of Clearwater; I'm

co-director of the Pace Environmental Clinic, and I'm speaking tonight as a resident of Rockland County and a person who practically lives in the Hudson River in the summer. I spend as much of my free time as I can on the river, in the river. I paddle a kayak in it, sail on a sailboat. My kids and I go swimming in it several times a week in the summer. And I want to speak strongly in favor of the dredging proposed by EPA.

Basic principle here. Who's river is this? The river belongs to the people. It doesn't belong to General Electric. It doesn't belong to EPA. It doesn't belong to the federal government. It belongs to the people of New York State. It's my river. It's your river. If somebody makes a mess of my property, my river, somebody makes a mess of our property, basic principle, you clean up your mess. It is especially true if you've made a lot of money making the mess, but even if you didn't, you clean up your mess. You don't have to prove that I'm going to die because of the mess you made. You've

got to clean it up anyway. General Electric has to clean up its mess.

I agreed with just about everything that Mr. Caspe said, and I thought he said it very well. But there's one thing I disagree with though. One piece of General Electric propaganda that seems to be gaining hold. The idea that General Electric's discharge of PCB's was "legal" or permitted under a permit. And I'm not speaking as a law professor here -- well, I am actually, but I'm speaking as this isn't my opinion. It is the opinion of the Department of Environmental Conservation. The Administrative Law Judge who heard the case against General Electric brought by DEC back in the '70s and ruled that General Electric's discharge of polychlorinated biphenyls violated its permit because it was a discharge of toxic materials in toxic amounts causing a violation of the water quality standards for New York State. So not only do you have the basic principle that you got to clean up a mess, you got another principle.

Which is if you made a mess and you broke the law in doing it, you got to clean it up.

Now, it's too late for my children. They are never while they are growing up going to be able to go fishing in the Hudson River, catch a fish, bring it home and say mom, dad, let's cook the fish I caught in the Hudson River today. Let's have it for dinner. Because I would be exposing them, they would be exposing themselves to risk of cancer, and it would be against the DEC fish advisory because of PCBs in the Hudson. It is too late for my kids. They will never be able to do that before they grow up, catch a fish in the Hudson River and eat it. But I am hoping that, God willing, some day when I have grandchildren that my grandchildren at least will be able to go fish in the Hudson River, catch a fish, bring it home and eat it. And that's why I want General Electric to clean up its mess. Thank you.

MR. CASPE: John Lipscomb?

MR. JOHN LIPSCOMB: Hi, I'm John Lipscomb. I live in Piermont. This is my

daughter Nellie. And I work for River Keeper. I'm boat captain for River Keepers. I spend my life on the river; I'm a boat builder and boatyard manager.

I appreciate very much the EPA's decision to go forward with cleanup, and I appreciate very much the opportunity to comment. I think we ought to remember, however, that the decision we make today is a decision that affects many, many generations. None of those people are here to comment today. So I really believe that the burden is on us. GE was wrong to discharge PCBs in the first place and it would be very wrong for us to leave the PCBs there now. Because our decision affects many, many generations to come.

I also hope that our federal government will support the EPA. There's a great cynicism now that with enough money and enough lobbyists the truth can be buried. And I think that the American people, the New York, the Hudson River constituency needs to see that science and truth prevail over money

and power. And so I urge you forward, and I appreciate your efforts very much.

MR. CASPE: Thank you. Next speaker Bob Walters.

MR. BOB WALTERS: Thank you. My name is Bob Walters. I'm the director of the Bezak Environmental Educational Center. We are on the Hudson River down in Yonkers New York. We do Hudson River education programs. And I was talking to Doug Tomchuk earlier this evening. I guess it was ten years ago that we had a symposium down in Yonkers about PCBs and cleaning up the river, and ten years is a long time. You know, it's ten years that really it has been studied and studied some more, and now it's time to clean it up.

One of the programs we do down at the Bezak Environmental Center is bring school groups down to the river, and we allow them to work with the educator pulling the net through the water, so they'll see the different kinds of fish life in the river, be it small striped bass, eels, blue claw crabs. And the kids are always impressed with all

the fish that are in the river. And they are impressed that the river is cleaner, cleaner to look at. And one of the questions that always comes up is can we eat the fish? And there's always that no, no, you can't eat the fish. The river is cleaner, it's swimmable, but you can't eat the fish.

And I think John said it really well. The legacy that we have is not only to the kids that are going down to the river that we teach, but for generations of kids that the river should be cleaner. I think General Electric at this time and the EPA should clean up the river.

I get River Watch in the mail. This is a publication that GE distributes. And one of my personal pet peeves is GE always has a picture of a bucket dredge, and a bucket dredge is a big clam shell, and there's a giant piling sticking out of it, and all this mud is being vomited back into the river. If dredging was going to happen that way with PCBs, what a terrible way it would be. But see, the problem is GE doesn't

want the truth out. It doesn't want the truth told that that dredge isn't going to be used. No remediation uses bucket dredges anymore. But here it is, front page picture. It is alive. And it's time for GE and the EPA to work together to clean up our river.

And I would ask Jack Welsh, the CEO of General Electric -- he'll retire soon, and Jack Welsh and the stockholders have made lots of money with GE over the years. But I say to Mr. Welsh, wouldn't you rather have a legacy that you let your stockholders make money but also in the end you owned up and you cleaned up the mess you had made over the years?

I thank the EPA and would urge that we get on with the cleanup. Thank you very much.

MR. CASPE: Next speaker is Patrick Shannon.

MR. PATRICK SHANNON: Hello, my name is Patrick Shannon. I'm speaking on behalf of the Sierra Club.

It has been 23 years since General

Electric was told to stop dumping PCBs into the Hudson River, and we would like to applaud the EPA for bringing forth a plan that calls for removal of these PCBs, and the main reasons given are that PCBs, as they explained, are human carcinogens, they do cause other noncancer effects in humans as well. And they have been here for way too long.

Besides the health reasons though it would be nice to have the river back the way it was, where you can go fishing bring back your fish and eat them. It would be nice to restore the fisheries to where the they were; more income coming into the communities and support them as well. We do have the appropriate technology now to complete a dredging project that would be effective, and it would take the health and the environment of the river and for the communities along the river. So the Sierra Club does support the plan, although we would like to see that it goes further towards removing PCBs more in depth. So thank you

for your time.

MR. CASPE: Thank you. Maria C. Ironside.

MS. MARIA IRONSIDE: Good evening. My name is Maria Ironside. I live in Tappan in Orangetown. My family and neighbors fully support the EPA's excellently researched and safe targeted dredging decision.

This fall I approached my neighbors in Orangetown at soccer game with a petition urging the EPA to mandate a cleanup by General Electric. I collected about 70 signatures, which were submitted to the EPA in November. Of all the mostly strangers I approached, maybe six or seven said they weren't interested or didn't support the measure. So my local survey concludes 90 percent in favor, five percent opposed and five percent undecided.

I long for a time when I can tell my son that our majestic Hudson is open for swimming, open for traditional fishing, free of the fear of PCB contamination. Our children and grandchildren deserve to grow up

in an environment they do not need to fear. A healthy Earth communicates on the deepest levels a message of security and trust in the future. The heart, our collective spirit, longs for justice. President bush and Mrs. Whitman, you should know, it damages our collective sense of morality when the most powerful, one of the world's most wealthy entities can shirk its responsibility. Don't we teach our children to respect the property of others and to clean up after themselves?

Tonight as I was leaving the house my five-year-old son asked me where I was going. And then he asked me what does EPA stand for, Environmental Protection Agency. He then said, I quote, "By the name of that organization I can tell what the answer is going to be: General Electric, clean up the Hudson." Thank you very much.

MR. CASPE: John Dyba.

MR. JOHN DYBA: My name is John Dyba. I live in Pearl River, New York.

I was at an environmental management council meeting on January the

17th for the Rockland County group, and we had a Clearwater person there talking about the cleaning of the Hudson. I'm not going to get any applause I know when I leave, because I cannot see the logic in attacking the PCBs.

Case in point, the Bible for cancer causation is a book of 1500 pages, Cancer Epidemiology and Prevention by Scott Feld. And it reveals no reference whatsoever to PCB containing fish or any other source of PCBs causing malignancy. And she goes on to state that contacting the National Cancer Institute, they finally got an answer from them after about three years, and it came from a Susan Syber, a scientist and director of communications for the National Cancer Institute. And she said to this writer: The institute knew of no evidence that eating fish from the Hudson River posed a cancer risk. And why should we tolerate government policies that purport to prevent cancer by targeting environmental risks our nation's top cancer experts say does not exist.

I have relatives up in Buffalo, and

I told them already, expect to see that 2.65 cubic yards of sediment coming up your way. I read the newspaper down here, and the people from Fort Edwards say that they are opposed to dredging. The people in Pittsfield, Massachusetts, have sustained dredging for three years, and they are opposed to it. But if you're going to dredge, at least do it the right way. You don't put the sediment in the rail car and put it in a landfill and say, well, the landfill is covered. I don't know a landfill that doesn't leak. But anyway. And we find PCBs under both polar ice caps, so we know it travels by air.

But what I want to get at is that in the lead industry, which I'm pretty familiar with -- not a chemist, but there are no longer slag heaps at primary working of the lead ore. The slag heaps are gone. People right down here in west Nyack, Solaco, they can do molecular bonding with the lead and sulphur, and they make the lead back to its original state, the lead sulphite. And I

would think it is ashame that if you people are continuing with PCB dredging that you don't treat the sediment before you take it to some landfill, a site particularly near Buffalo. Thank you.

MR. CASPE: I would just like to respond quickly to a couple of those items. First with regard to Pittsfield. At earlier meetings, actually the last couple of weeks, people from Pittsfield have showed up and spoken in favor of this site and talked very positively about the experience in Pittsfield. I would point that out first.

I would like to go to the National Cancer Institute's statement, and I would like to make sure we all understand that. They have said that they could not find any proof that eating fish from the Hudson River caused cancer. That's true. And that's because there has never been an epidemiological study done of people along the Hudson River. And it would be almost impossible to ever devise one that you would be able to link eating fish with cancer.

Because there are plenty of people up and down the Hudson River unfortunately who have gotten cancer. But define the cause. They are exposed to multiple causes. If somebody gets cancer, you say what did they get cancer from? Was it this, this, or this? They haven't been living in a bubble. So that's why we use laboratory animals to determine whether there's cancer or not. You can control what they are exposed to and how they are exposed. It is not us making up the story about PCBs being a probable human carcinogen.

As I said earlier, it is almost every health organization in the country and in the world. This is not something that EPA is making up. We don't get a benefit out of making it up. So I would just clarify those two points. I don't know if there were any other points you wanted to clarify. There was a whole lot said there.

MR. DYBA: Well, little animals in laboratories are not human beings.

MR. CASPE: Well, there are also

non-cancer effects.

Marian Olsen is our risk assessment, human health expert.

MS. MARIAN OLSEN: I'd just like to address some of the issues that you raised. The National Toxicology Program is the nation's group that's responsible for valuating animal studies and determining classifications of carcinogenicity, and they evaluated the data back in the 1980s and came to the conclusion that PCBs are probable human carcinogens. In 1996 EPA evaluated human epidemiological studies, and these were conducted in workers who had worked in plants and were exposed to PCBs as part of their jobs. These studies were conducted around the world. And what EPA concluded at that time is that this evidence is suggestive of PCBs causing cancer in humans.

In addition, EPA evaluated a number of animal studies, and there is a consistency in those studies. We have found that PCBs are causing cancer in the animals. Animals have been shown to be an excellent indication

of potential health effects on humans. This has been used for years. They are used in the pharmaceutical firms to identify doses and to identify the effectiveness of various chemicals. And this information again is supportive of the fact that PCBs are probable human carcinogens. This evaluation by EPA was reviewed by a panel of fifteen individual experts in various fields of toxicology outside of the agency. They evaluated the data and came to the same conclusions. So this is a science. And if you would be interested in looking at the data, looking at the number of tumors that were found in the animals, that is available on our website.

MR. CASPE: Thank you, Marian. Next speaker is Ian Raywid.

MR. IAN RAYWID: Hi, I apologize in advance for my ranting and raving. My name is Ian Raywid. I'm a fisherman on the Hudson River. I'm also a commercial fisher on the Hudson River.

I don't know, apparently all decisions have been made. Your proposal is

in place. You took great pains to discount most of the public's objections before any public comments were made here. A few things strike me funny other than that one. That most of the speakers, through their lives and livelihoods that we have heard so far to the fact that the Hudson River is toxic. I support the River Keepers. I support a lot of the environmentalal groups in the Hudson River foundation. But it seems odd to me that they are the ones that are complaining about the river is so bad and that GE is so despicable, they need this thing cleaned up when that's how they make their living and that's their hobby.

I've attended recent meetings with the DEC. I don't know what information you guys go on with the Department of Health. I know you're talking about a stretch of the river far north of here. But in fact, the DEC and the Department of Health in their studies over the last ten years and 25 years have shown such a decline in the PCB levels in the striped bass in the lower Hudson

Valley that they are considering opening them for sale to the general public in Fulton Street. All of their studies and information that they provided at their hearings show a steady decline in the contamination of fish in the Hudson River, as much as a tenfold decline over the last 25 years. None of the information that you've provided or that I could read in the brief time we had in your proposal says anything about what the natural remedy to this may be. I do believe that the PCB levels are dropping naturally on their own. They are primarily dispersed so widely over the river that remediation up north might help up north. I don't see how it would help down here.

You've suggested that General Electric dumped upwards of a million pounds of PCBs into the Hudson River. That there are now 200,000 pounds I believe you said remaining in the river?

MR. CASPE: The upper river.

MR. RAYWID: Those 800,000 pounds went somewhere. Either natural flushing of

the river or biodegradation or, you know, somewhere they went to. Your best proposal now is to remove another 100,000 pounds, leaving another 100,000 pounds for us to still live with. I don't see any of those being the grand answer, and it seems that mother nature is doing some of these things on her own.

There were so many things I wanted to rebut. You said that many of the public's complaints ignore realities, but the health realities are that these fish are cleaner. It's a healthy population of fish. The fish are the ones that are getting contaminated in all of this. No human that swims in the Hudson River in our area is going to be contaminated by PCBs. If you really think so, you're living in a dream world. I don't think there's any tourism or any fear of anybody to go or come and visit the Hudson Valley because there's some PCBs in the river. All the evidence has been that the river is getting cleaner and cleaner, but we're hearing the horror stories tonight.

The other thing that strikes me as absolutely hilarious is that these chemicals are considered the scourge of the river. We have got to get them out of our ecosystem. But you're willing to give them to somebody else for a price. I honestly don't understand what you could do with the community where you're going to transport these things, concentrated in massive doses that probably would kill rats and fish and tell them that they can live with it.

MR. CASPE: Thank you. I just would like to respond to a few of the items. First, as far as where the material is going, it's going to commercial facilities that would be encapsulating the material. These are existing facilities. These are not new facilities. These are facilities that make money. They are in communities and locations right now where they are fully accepted. We were also, by the way -- what I didn't say earlier and would I just like to clarify, is one of the options we are looking at is the potential recycling of the material where we

might be able to stabilize the material and make it into tile or something else through some various processes. So we clarify that.

I also would just like to say that the fish information that I gave you was the fish impacts on the upper river, not for the lower river where the commercial fisheries are where I believe you've been to those meetings as far as the striped bass fishery or something like that. And I would point out that the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, through John Cahill, their Commissioner, has come out in favor of EPA's plan to clean the Hudson River. I would point to that as well.

MR. TOMCHUK: I think I just want to make the point that PCBs in the aquatic environment are available for bioaccumulation. So there's magnification of the food chain. This is the problem. You can drink the water. It meets acceptable standards. You can actually swim as well. And the soils would actually not be considered extremely contaminated if they

were on land. But the bioaccumulation of the food chain contaminates the fish so that you can't eat them, and that's the main exposure route that we are concerned with on this.

MR. CASPE: Okay. Manna Jo Greene.

MS. MANNA JO GREENE: I'mManna Jo Greene. I'm the Environmental Director for Clearwater, and Clearwater would like to again congratulate EPA on its proposed plan to actively remove PCBs from the highly contaminated hot spots in the upper Hudson.

General Electric has been perpetuating this misleading notion that the river is cleaning itself up. It seems that General Electric isn't satisfied with just poisoning the river; now they are trying to poison our minds. PCBs are persistent and toxic. The health effects include the fact that they are probable human carcinogens. They cause hormonal disruption, including estrogenic and anti-estrogenic effects. They affect growth and development and neurological disorders, including increased learning disorders and a dampening of

intelligence. We are talking about future generations. Modern dredging equipment is capable of cleaning up the Hudson River. And in addition, as was mentioned, their secondary lines of defense, the circles that you saw on the map were the silt curtains that would contain any material if it were temporarily resuspended, and then it could continue to be cleaned. And we've made many of these points.

I also wanted to mention that when the PCBs are moving downstream, they continue to move into the environment and not only contaminate the lower Hudson but move out into the ocean. When sediments are exposed, they volatilize and then are airborne and are transported as far as the northern arctic. They have been found in the Inuit people up in northern Canada.

So what's happening is that PCBs are dispersing, and dilution is not the solution to pollution. Removal and ultimately we would like to see -- we agree with some of the comments made here tonight,

more attention given to treatment technologies. So we have some concerns that volatilization was not adequately addressed. And we really want to assure that the removal is in a closed system, from the point of removal to the point of disposal or more preferably treatment. And then we'd like to ask that EPA look more closely at the area between Hudson Falls and Fort Edward above section one.

And finally, we want to assure that there is ongoing public comment. I appreciate that you talked about the fact that after the record of decision there would be ongoing public comment and accountability to all the communities that will be affected. Thank you.

MR. CASPE: The next speaker is John Gromada.

I forgot, there was one other thing about 200,000 pounds, and we were only getting the 100,000. The question is where is the other 1.1 million pounds or whatever the number is. The answer is, the other 1.1

million pounds is down river. It is dispersed throughout the lower river, throughout New York harbor, throughout the New York area. It is outwashed is the answer. It is someplace where we can't get at it. It is dispersed at this stage of the game, but it has not gone away.

MR. JOHN GROMADA: Hello, my name is John Gromada, and I represent the Concerned Citizens for Responsible Development based here in Rockland County. The CCRD has been actively involved in environmental advocacy in riverfront communities since 1986. We strongly support removing PCB sediment from targeted hot spots in the upper Hudson River. Here in Rockland we are interested in returning the Tappan Zee and Haverstraw Bay to the great fisheries of the east back to healthy productivity.

Many residents here eat fish out of the river despite health warnings. Regular consumers of fish face estimated increased risk of one additional case of cancer per one thousand persons exposed. We are interested

in eradicating PCBs from our fisheries forever. We don't want to see continued PCB contamination coming down from these hot spots for generations. We would like them to clean this up now, once and for all.

GE claims the river is cleaning itself of PCBs, although our studies have shown PCBs are not being universally buried and often remine in the top nine inches of the sediment. Less than ten percent is dechlorinated over the past 20 years. These less chlorinated PCBs are still toxic and more mobile. The estimated $460 billion remediation will greatly enhance the level in economy. This amount of money is a very small price to pay for the restoration of our river. The State of New York is now considering spending more than $4 billion on a new Tappan Zee bridge project that is unnecessary. Why can't we ask this corporation who has destroyed our river to invest a small fraction of that amount to return it to health. And why can't we ask GE to bring this river back to life. Thank you.

MR. CASPE: Thank you. The next speak can is Don Wanamaker. I would just also point out, remember I showed those graphs of the fish trends that showed a leveling. That was not EPA's data. That was New York State DEC's data, also New York State DEC's graphs.

MR. DON WANAMAKER: Hi, my name is is Don Wanamaker. I grew up in Nyack, currently live in Suffern. Maybe my brothers and I should volunteer to be part of that prospective epidemiologic study, but I have a couple of questions. I'm still on a big learning curve on this project.

You talked a lot about PCB concentration in silt, but you also indicated that PCBs are partially admissible in Hudson River water. During the dredging are you anticipating an increase in the concentration of the dissolve phase PCB, not silt entrained, within the water column moving downgradient? If so, how far south?

Second question: Is part of the remedial strategy the enhanced bioremediation

of residual PCB either adsorbed or absorbed onto silt soil particles remaining after the dredging of the hot spots is completed?

MR. CASPE: I'm not sure I understand the second question. First question we got. Second question?

MR. WANAMAKER: Second question: Is part of the remedial strategy enhanced bioremediation, not natural attenuation, of residual PCB either adsorbed or absorbed onto soil silt particles remaining after the hot spots is completed?

MR. TOMCHUK: We've done some modeling to determine the amount of PCBs that would be transported downstream as far as from the resuspension from a dredging operation. That model really is a sediment based model, so it is really modeling the particular transport. So we do have to look into the dissolve phase to transport a little bit more. We do believe though that because the particulate drops out of the water fairly quickly as it moves downstream, there will not be a long opportunity for the PCBs to

desorb from the particulate. It will be entering into the water column. Of course, the water column monitoring that would be going on downstream is a whole water sample, so it would catch either particulate or dissolve phase material.

With respect to the enhanced bioremediation, we have not looked into that specifically. Most of the PCBs in the areas that we are not addressing in the upper Hudson and those in the lower Hudson are found at fairly low concentrations, so that those are areas that it's more difficult to actually do bioremediation because the concentration isn't there enough for the organisms to adapt to actually do that itself within the riverbed. Even if you picked that material up, it would probably be hard to treat it through bioremediation.

MR. CASPE: Melissa Rosen.

MISS KATI ROSEN: Good afternoon. I'm Kati Rosen. We need to clean this river because it is the habitat of fish. Fish need a home. We don't want them to die from

garbage or something when you throw it into the river. It kills the fish. It kills the fish of their habitat. Now we want to clean this river of fish killing. There is no ever, ever throwing garbage in this river, because these fish are part of a habitat of what we eat, and we need them to live. And the bakers, when they catch the fish from the river, when they catch them it makes them dead when we eat them, but we want them to have their own habitat to live. We're people and they are living too. Not any of us are important too, just fish, animals, animals are important because they need food to live. It's part of a habitat.

MS. MELISSA ROSEN: In Nyack they call me Kati's mother. I'm Melissa Rosen, and I have a brief e-mail that I sent the EPA earlier to read: I cannot stress emphatically enough my desire to rehabilitate the Hudson River of its PCB problem. I've read the literature on the EPA website, and aside of some minor questions about the dredging of the PCBs, and hopefully they

could be recycled in some way, I would hate to see these either redistributed or moved to some other person's community. I just don't think that's fair. I feel that this must be done and quickly. Every day more silt runs downstream to the ocean. Once it gets there, there will be no possibility of cleaning it up. One can dredge a river, the Atlantic would be impossible.

I would also like to add that I feel that the actions of General Electric surrounding their attempts to get out of their responsibilities have been at best reprehensible, bordering on illegal. I'm not an attorney. But having called their line, you know, their "polling" line, and spoken to them twice and heard what they had to say, the things that they said on that line were absolutely outright not true. There were things that I've read in the EPA literature, Elliott Spitzer's letter from the Attorney General that they just simply lie to you on the phone. So I would like to publicly state I will not buy another GE product. I will

not buy so much as a light bulb from these people until they clean it up. Thank you.

MR. CASPE: The next speaker is Noel Haskell.

FEMALE SPEAKER: He left.

MR. CASPE: He left. Gil Hawkins.

MR. GIL HAWKINS: My name is Gil Hawkins. I'm the environmental director of the Hudson River Fisherman's Association, New Jersey chapter. I live in Leona, New Jersey. I fish the Hudson, I fish off of Haverstraw. I caught a 23-pound striped bass out here. I'm also positive -- I've been tested and positive for PCBs. In 1999 a study group came from in the Sinai Hospital and took blood from some of the members of the Hudson River Fisherman's Association, some of those more active on the Hudson. And our levels of PCBs were elevated in our bodies. I don't know what the outcome is going to be for myself. I have three children.

Last week I had the opportunity to talk in New York City, and I asked the EPA if they would prod Christy Whitman, our outgoing

Governor, to make sure that she does the job that they have done previously. We certainly hope they will. But now I have another request, and that is that I hope the EPA will come down to New Jersey and have a hearing down in New Jersey.

MR. CASPE: We will.

MR. HAWKINS: Please. There has been some floundering back and forth as to whether you guys are going to come down there. I guarantee you, you'll get a turn out.

Now, onto my thing. One of the questions that was asked about the amount of PCBs in the fish was that striped bass have been showing lower levels of PCBs. That's true, and the reason why that's true is because the standard was changed. Every one knows science, good science, as Mr. Bush puts it. Well, how about if you change the standard exposure measuring the levels of PCBs in a striped bass and all the fatty tissue, the skin, the liver, all those areas where the oily deposits land. Those are

where the PCBs go. Same thing in crabs. Now they are testing the fillets. That's a pretty interesting concept. You know, that little dotted line along the striped bass, where it says eat only this area? Well, we were talking about -- you were talking about people along the Hudson River, people who don't know what the DEC is, don't know what the EPA is. Don't know what PCBs are. There are people that are down there in the afternoons fishing. And believe me, when they pull out a nice 25-inch striped bass, you think they say, wait a minute, honey, we can only eat the fillets. Striped bass caught off of Haverstraw, Saugerties, Croton, East River, the bay, those striped bass move all throughout the river. If somebody thinks that they are fooling -- if somebody thinks they are catching a striped bass off of Montauk or even as far south as the Chesapeake Bay and that they are free from PCBs because the water is nice and clear and they can smell that sea breeze, well, guess what, those striped bass came from the

Haverstraw Bay. This is one of the largest nuseries in all of the world for striped bass. Nuseries, I'm not even saying spawning grounds. I'm saying nuseries. That's where they go from little baby fish to bigger and bigger fish, 23-pound fish. And as we know, those striped bass eat the clams on the bottom, all the oyster beds off of Croton point. Those striped bass eat all those fish, those little things and that bioaccumulates just like DDT did in the eagles. I'm sorry for taking so much time. I would just like to say that those people who are against dredging consider the alternatives. Blame the source, not the solution. Thank you.

MR. CASPE: David Higby.

MR. DAVID HIGBY: I'm David Higby. I'm with Environmental Advocates of New York State. We are a statewide environmental policy and education group that represents over 6,000 individuals and 130 grassroots organizations statewide, and we are also the New York affiliate for the national wildlife

federation which has 4 million members nationwide.

I'm the Adirondack project director for EA and also the solid waste project director. And people say to me why do you take such an interest in the PCB issue, and I say, well, the river begins in the Adirondacks and the discharges are really solid waste. And that's sort of a joke, because in fact my interest goes back longer than that. Long before I became a working environmentalist I was interested in PCBs, because I live in Washington County. Washington County is where Hudson Falls and Fort Edward is. I drove here 165 miles tonight to speak with you, as briefly as I can. Fortunately, I don't have to talk about the public health issues or the environmental issues. Although we have certainly a public health crisis in the upper Hudson region. And I don't need to talk to you about the environment, because Kati Rosen already said it to you much better than I ever could.

Just one anecdote about it. It is

not just the fish. Not long ago I got a call from the president of the Chamber of Commerce of Fort Edward, New York, who said to me, Mr. Higby, I know you're an environmentalist, but I need to talk to you about part of this issue you may not be familiar with. I said what's that. She said it is the economy, we are being held hostage here by this contamination. She said I wish that we could put outside Fort Edwards a signed that said welcome to Fort Edward, an historic town with a beautiful river running through it. But to be honest, we have to put a sign that says welcome to Fort Edward, an historic town with a toxic Superfund running through it. And so of all the reprehensible things that the polluter in this case has done -- and certainly they have been reprehensible -- they soiled and polluted one of the world's great rivers. And then after it was disclosed and after that pollution was made illegal, they used lawyers and every trick in the book to stall that cleanup, and they have been very effective in stalling that cleanup

for the last 20 years. But one of the other really reprehensible things they have done is with their absolutely overwhelming propaganda campaign. Up where I live, they have ripped the civic heart out of our community. So I'm asking you as people in Rockland County to join with us, the people of Washington County and all of the counties up and down this 200-mile Superfund site to join together so that we can take back our river, take back our economy and take back our community. Thank you very much.

MR. CASPE: The next speaker is Fulvio Ortega.

MR. FULVIO ORTEGA: Good evening. My name is Fulvio Ortega. I'm a business owner here in Haverstraw, tae kwon do on Main Street. I've been in Haverstraw for now 40 years, and it seems like a political game. This is like the same thing with Agent Orange, you know, they created it, they didn't know what they created, and then 40 years later everybody is dying. Indian Point, the same thing is happening over

there. You know, it's got to stop somehow. You know it is killing everybody.

And another question for our mayor here in Haverstraw. The majority of the people that go fishing down in the Hudson are Hispanic. The EPA has no Hispanic representation here who are bilingual, so the people don't understand what they are eating. What I see here is everybody that speaks English. The Hispanic people are out there, and they don't know what's going on. Okay, I really, you know, respectfully, I would like an answer to that. Thank you.

MR. CASPE: Thank you. I could respond in one item and just say that we have provided actually funding to the New York State Department of Health and through New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, very sizeable funding actually, to get postings and public health advisories out bilingual. To warn people whether it is getting into clinics, so on and so forth throughout the communities to try to make sure that people know not to eat the fish.

We have tried to target neonatal clinics. We have tried different things like that with them, but we've provided the funding and we are certainly aware of that issue and we are trying to deal with it. And we'll certainly try to deal with it a little bit better in the future. Thank you.

Margaret Eberle.

MS. MARGARET EBERLE: Could I clarify something first. Who is going to pay for this? I'm sorry I can't give you an answer, but I'm confused on the issue.

MR. CASPE: At this stage of the game, all the EPA has done is proposed a remedy. Once we finalize that proposal, then the next step is, obviously, we go to the responsible party and the responsible party would be General Electric.

MS. EBERLE: Good.

MR. CASPE: And the law would ask them to pay. And I don't know what they'll say, and then I don't know what EPA will do.

MS. EBERLE: Okay, thank you very much. I'm glad it is taking that route at

any rate.

My name is Margaret Eberle by the way. I live in White Plains, New York, which isn't located right on the Hudson, but I spend a lot of time on the Hudson. And one of the things I observed is just what this last gentleman just said. It is not only a lot of Latinos out there fishing on the river, there are a lot of Taiwanese. There are a lot of people who do not understand English, and they are fishing on that river. Because if they don't fish on the river, they don't eat. So they really don't have much choice about deciding whether they are going to eat what comes out of that river. I also feed the homeless, so I know there's a lot of hungry people in Westchester County. In fact, I think it is one of the highest in the United States, and that's why they are eating out of that river. So even having somebody tell them not to eat there would be a problem.

The other thing I want to I think comment on, I think it is kind of interesting

that a few people I've heard here who are against this dredging because PCBs are harmless. Why are they worried about where this stuff is going then. I think that's an interesting point. The thing I would like to say, as I said, I spend a lot of time on that river. GE dumped that stuff into the river. I would not -- by the way, I've seen the posters, huge posters up in Albany against dredging this river and cleaning it up. Of course paid for by GE, the company that brings things to life. Boy, they sure do. Not only about PCBs, nuclear triggers. There's lot of reasons why people shouldn't be buying things made by GE, and I'd certainly recommend that. But I would like to recommend that they stop putting these big posters up everywhere, and they ought to save that money to pay to clean this up. Because personally, as a citizen I'm sick and tired of paying for things that large corporations who are making zillions of dollars are dumping in all parts of my environment and I as a taxpayer have to end up paying for it.

We ought to go after them real big. They ought to pay for it. And I would suggest them not only paying for it, I think a lot of them that made the decisions to dump it in there in the first place ought to be put in jail for malicious mischief at the very least and for potentially killing people on the other end of it.

MR. CASPE: Next speaker is Joan Indusi.

MS. JOAN INDUSI: Good evening I'm Joan Indusi. I live in Ossining. I'm here to encourage the dredging of the Hudson River hot spots to remove the PCBs. More and more studies are showing links between PCBs and damaging health effects. Just some of the neurological effects include Parkinson's Disease, as well as learning disabilities. The Hudson River is a source of quality protein. People do eat the fish there. The PCBs are toxic. They are toxic in fish; they are toxic in people. They are toxic in the environment, and they must be removed.

MR. CASPE: Thank you. Next

speaker is Pauline Anderson. Pauline Anderson. The next speaker is Warren Marshall.

MR. WARREN MARSHALL: My name is Warren M. I live in Nanuet, New York. I wonder why the people say GE should be the only ones cleaning up the river. Everybody wanted the products made by GE or Brand X company and Brand X company happened to be making this stuff. Now, the only reason they can pollute is because the government let's them. The government sure jumped on me because they thought I was growing mosquitos in my yard and something about the mosquito population they are worrying about around here. Well, guess what, they made four visits about the mosquito problem and never found one larvae. Did they need four visits? No.

Another thing, how about the tobacco? They spent all these millions of dollars in lawyers fees was to squeeze the tobacco companies for a little more money out of them. That's all that amounted to. That

and PCBs. And how about the savings and loan deregulation. That was done. The government did it. They can't blame the savings and loan. They weren't supposed to listen to the lobbyists. It is the government supposed to be in charge. If they let somebody else in charge, it is their responsibility. But of course, it is the people's responsibility too to let the government know. People usually do, and the government doesn't want to listen.

We have what I call the United States second largest white elephant called Pyramid in Rockland County. We were led to believe by the government people who are supposed to know about the environment tell us oh, it won't cause any problem with the environment, in fact, it is magic. It not only won't pollute, it will suck up pollution that's there. I don't believe this type of stuff, and part of it is promulgated by the government. I guess that's about bad enough for now. Thank you.

MR. CASPE: The next speaker is

Frank Carbone Jr.

MR. FRANK CARBONE, JR.: My name is Frank Carbone. I'm from Orange County. I wasn't planning on speaking here tonight, but my buddy, Dennis, came with me and he encouraged me to get up to speak.

I'm an outdoor writer from Orange County. I'm also a fisherman. I fish the river. I like to eat fish. Also an outdoorsman from Orange County, a long time fisherman and hunter and also a concerned citizen. Day before yesterday -- and I might echo a little bit about when a lady who was here earlier might have said, but day before yesterday I attended the all day PCB symposium at S.U.N.Y. School of Public Health in Rensselaer, New York. Seven scientists presented their findings on the effects of PCBs in our environment, in our fish, in our food, in our air, in our water, and even mother's milk. And with mother's milk, if you believe science -- I believe science -- I don't believe certainly politicians. I don't even like to use the word politicians, let's

say public servants. But the findings that they made with respect to mother's milk is that there was high levels of PCB's coming out of certain mother's milk, and that's the first mother's milk that forms when they first started feeding the baby were very high levels, and then it sort of levels off.

It is important to note that of these seven scientists who presented their findings the day before yesterday, four were women. I found their presentations and the presenters to be excellent. The symposium was attended by about 250 scientists, doctors, healthcare professionals and the general public concerned with our environment. The presenters spoke about the effects of PCBs, that the PCBs have on estrogen levels, testosterone levels, cancers, reproduction, immune systems, learning abilities, reproductive organ size, and malformation.

I did not see any recognizable public servants in attendance yesterday. I'll bet some would have been there if it was

sponsored by GE though. One presenter spoke about the air measurements detecting PCBs adjacent to the Hudson River above and away from the water. So it appears that the PCBs can escape from the river into the air.

This is an excerpt from my column that's going to appear in next week's paper. I continue by saying: The red flag goes up with me when I see certain public servants defend GE and go against a PCB remediation plan for the Hudson River by the EPA. As I see it, most -- and I'll underline most -- public servants don't attend information meetings of this type. There are a few exceptions, far too few. Perhaps it is because many of our public servants are too closely connected to big business. More citizens need to get involved in overseeing the activities of their own public servants in government. I feel that less than one percent of the citizenry gets directly involved.

There is going to be a video of this symposium that happened two days ago in

Albany. Be on the alert for this. It might be on your local cable TV. I hope they put it out.

I want to just quote an American anthropologist by the name of Margaret Meade who lived from 1901 to 1978. "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it's the only thing that ever has."

I just wanted to thank Congressman Gilman, the EPA and anybody else who was responsible for this. I'm looking forward to this happening up in Orange County.

There's this little book here when you buy your fishing license, there's a lot of health advisories in here, and it says I can only eat one half a pound per month of striped bass from the Hudson. But yet there they are attempting to open up this fishery. Who is going to advise the people in the fish markets when they buy the fish at the fish market? Is there going to be a sign there also that says eat only a half a pound a month? I don't think they are going to sell

much fish. Anyway, I guess I'd better let somebody else speak. Thank you.

MR. CASPE: I don't know if you wanted to say anything, Marian. I know you were at that conference as well.

MR. TOMCHUK: I think it was the FDA level.

MR. CASPE: Do you want to talk about that a little?

MS. OLSEN: I just would like to mention, we have heard a lot of talk about fish advisories tonight. These advisories are available on the home page for the New York State Department of Health, and I'll just give you that so that if you'd like to take a look at specifically what these advisories are saying, that would be available. It is www.health.state.ny.us/nysdoh/environ/fish.htm.

MR. CASPE: Does anybody want to know that? Because I'll have her say it again.

MS. OLSEN: I'm sorry. Www.health.state.ny.us/nysdoh/environ/fish.htm.

I also wanted to just address something the last gentleman mentioned. There are FDA -- Food and Drug Administration has specific regulations for fish that's in the general commerce, that's the fish that you can buy in your fish stores. And under those laws they have to meet specific standards which make the fish available and appropriate for consumption.

MR. CASPE: Thank you. The next speaker is Ed Liona.

MR. ED LIONA: Good evening. Well, my name is Ed Liona. I live in Verplanck, New York, which is on the other side of the river. I'm affiliated with no one here, so I'm just John Q. Public and stating for John Q. Public, I think the EPA should do the dredging and that GE should pay for the dredging. Thank you. Have a good evening.

MR. CASPE: Next speaker is Lilianna Connor.

MS. LILIANNA CONNOR: I live in New City here in Rockland County. The one who knew most about the environment is actually

my husband, but he couldn't make this meeting, because he died two years ago of cancer. And too young for his age. The house that we bought from a widow whose husband had died of the same type of cancer before we bought the house. At the corners where we live a year ago our neighbor died of the same type of cancer. Across the street another lady who is a neighbor of ours also died of cancer. Also on our road last year a neighbor died of Parkinson's Disease. And I find that too many people are dying. I find that not only we should get rid of PCBs from the Hudson River and I believe that it not only makes its way to our soil, our air, and our water through the fish. I think that it makes its way to our environment by many other ways that were explained tonight. And I think that not only the PCBs is what we should get rid of, but all the corporations, all the power plants should stop dumping chemicals, industrial materials of every kind into our environment, because too many people are dying and that's unacceptable.

I would like to ask the EPA, the Health Department and our Congressman if they could make lists of the different types of cancer that we have in Rockland County, how many people die per year in Rockland from this, how many people have died in the last ten years, and how many people have died in the last 20 years of cancer. And I would like the state to assume responsibilities for this. I find that no more people should die from dumping chemicals in our environment, and I think that we all would want that none of our loved ones die too soon, like my husband did. And I really think that there's not enough that can be done to clean it from PCBs and from all the other chemicals. Thank you.

MR. CASPE: Next speaker is Bob Wheeler.

MR. BOB WHEELER: Hi, my name is Bob Wheeler. I run a local business here, and I just want to speak on behalf of some of the small businesses on the waterfront. And I missed kind of the beginning of the

meeting, so I don't know if this question has already been answered. But I wonder if the EPA, in at least the lower part of the Hudson, is doing anything about any future navigation dredging? In other words, we know that we have PCBs in the lower part of the river, and I guess we know they came from GE, and we know that we need navigational dredging now and in the future. And small businesses are finding it very hard and small municipalities will find it very hard to do this kind of dredging in the future because PCBs are here. And my question basically is: Is the EPA going to address that in their Superfund plan? Thank you.

MR. CASPE: And the answer to the question is that we plan on addressing that through our plan by reducing the loads that flow into the river. However, I would also say that the State Attorney General is also seeking to protect the lower communities and with regard to navigational problems and extra costs that are involved in dredging and so on and so forth through other elements of

the program that really is beyond what EPA normally does. There are damages that I think you get tied into that or that go beyond. All we look to do is remediate the site. As far as damages that are caused by others, there are other people that authority is kind of aside to, and those are the resource trustees, which in this case include NOA, Department of Interior and New York State. And certainly the State Attorney General has been fairly outspoken on that.

Well, are there any other speakers? Nobody else has filled out any other cards. I would like to thank you all for coming and I would like to thank the Congressman and Mayor for having us, and thank you for arranging the facility. Thank you for your energy and your time and thank you for showing up. With that, I'm sure you'll be hearing from us and we'll be hearing from you thank you.

(Applause.)

CONGRESSMAN GILMAN: Thank you very much, Mr. Caspe.

I want to thank you, all of you for staying to this late hour. And we've asked the EPA to hold this town hall meeting so that all of you who are here tonight and I hope more in the Hudson Valley are going to be impacted by their final decision will take advantage of the opportunity to educate ourselves with regard to EPA's proposed plan and make certain we get our comments into the record, the public record, which will close on April 17.

I would like to thank Mrs. Rychlenski and Richard Caspe and Doug Tomchuk and Marian Olsen and all our friends at EPA. We thank Mayor Wassmer for being here tonight with us. And I know that our audience has gained invaluable information and knowledge from the presentation and will be sharing their views on the proposed plan for the Hudson, many of them who are here tonight I'm certain will want to submit some written testimony.

During the presentation this evening Mr. Caspe noted that EPA would

monitor the levels of PCBs coming down the river during dredging. Rest assured, we'll be working closely with the EPA to ensure that appropriate monitoring will be put in place to protect the health and safety of our lower Hudson communities. Something that I'm concerned about, and I would like to see more attention being given to the lower Hudson. Moreover, I think we need to learn more about the health of this section of our river. And I would like to work with the EPA and see more research done on the overall health and welfare of our Mid-Hudson region and acquire the necessary funding to bring that about.

So in conclusion, permit me to take this opportunity to once again thank all of you who participated this evening. It was Ronald Reagan who once said: Democracy is not a fragile flower but it still needs a great deal of cultivating. The strength of our nation relies on an active citizenry, and your participation this evening is both invigorating and appreciated. So if you have any further questions or would like

additional information, I know the EPA has set up a table outside with fact sheets and copies of the proposed plan for your review, and I would like to remind all of you, once again, that the public comment period closes April 17th. And then we anticipate a final report from EPA around August of this year. And then it will be up to all of us to make certain that that report is properly implemented.

Accordingly, this town hall meeting is now adjourned. And thank you once again.

(Proceedings adjourned.)