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Environmental Protection Agency**

**Remarks Prepared for Delivery  
Hudson River Dredging Announcement  
New York, NY  
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Good afternoon. Today I'm pleased to announce the Clinton-Gore Administration's proposal to restore the environmental health of one of our most important waterways -- the Hudson River -- and to protect the health of the millions of families and the vast array of fish and wildlife that live with . . . and depend on . . . this river and its estuaries.

As you know, from the late 1940's until 1977, the General Electric Corporation discharged more than one million pounds of the toxic waste, known as PCBs, into the Hudson River. We know PCBs are not only carcinogens, but they can also harm the immune systems, the nervous systems and the reproductive systems of both humans and animals.

Our proposal calls for the targeted dredging of the most polluted portions of 40 miles of the upper Hudson River on an accelerated five-year schedule. It will result in removing 100,000 pounds of toxic PCBs from the river through the targeted dredging of approximately 500 acres. In addition, we have worked with the state and GE to develop an aggressive approach to stop any new PCBs from leaking into the river from GE's old abandoned plants.

The Hudson is too active a river to simply leave PCBs in place. Failing to take these steps will leave fish highly contaminated for generations.

With this proposal, we believe we will start seeing results almost immediately. Fish contamination levels will drop in just a few years and fish in many areas will be safe to eat a generation sooner.

The proposal does not require any landfills to be constructed and relies upon existing disposal capacity – all located outside of the Hudson River Valley.

This proposal results from the most extensive scientific review ever for a Superfund site. It spanned 10 years and included 10,000 field samples, covering nearly a quarter of a century of data, and five independent peer reviews of the science.

It also employed the most public participation, including 65 public meetings. In addition, EPA reviewed thousands of pages of comments and reports from General Electric and held 50 separate meetings and conferences with company representatives spanning hundreds of hours.

And we're not through yet. More public meetings are scheduled to give both the community and business a chance to review and respond to our plan before it would become final next June.

I want to stress that EPA has used dredging technology in the past with excellent results in places like the Bayou Bonfouca in Louisiana and the GM site in upstate New York.

We recognize that this will not be a small undertaking – that it could cost nearly \$500 million. The best way to move forward is, not through years of litigation, but through a cooperative process. And I encourage GE to come to the table with us, the state of New York and affected communities and environmental groups to find the most common sense solution.

The Hudson River has been an important part of this country's environmental and economic heritage since before we were even a nation.

The Hudson River is priceless to New Yorkers. And it is priceless to every American -- from the art it has inspired, to its landscapes that are etched indelibly into all our imaginations.

Today more than 8 million people share the Hudson River Valley with hundreds of species of fish, resident and migrating birds, and other forms of wildlife . . . many of them threatened.

This river has been a vital part of our past. We owe it to the generations to follow to make it a healthy part of their future. And we believe this proposal is essential to getting us there.

Thank you.