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EPA TO CONTINUE WORK ON HUDSON RIVER PCBs  
REASSESSMENT; NO IMMEDIATE ACTION PLANNED

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(#98171) New York, N.Y. -- Stating there is "no quick fix available," the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) said today that it is not feasible to take early action to control the loss of PCBs from Hudson River sediments. The Agency pledged to continue to focus its full attention and resources on completing the ongoing Hudson River PCBs Reassessment so that a Proposed Plan can be presented to the public by December 2000.

EPA's Low Resolution Sediment Coring report, issued in July 1998, revealed a net loss of approximately 40 percent of the PCB inventory from 1984 to 1994 in sediments with high PCB concentrations in the Thompson Island Pool. These PCBs were in large part redistributed within the sediments throughout the Hudson River system.

Because the report revealed that such large quantities of PCBs were being made available to the Hudson River food chain, EPA announced it would evaluate whether interim measures could be taken to stem this loss. Interim measures studied included capping or dredging selected hot spots.

"While we remain deeply concerned about the availability of PCBs in the Hudson River environment, we were not able to identify a feasible and appropriate interim action that would have a significant impact," Regional Administrator Jeanne M. Fox said. "There is no quick fix available, and the most responsible thing we can do is continue our efforts to achieve a remedial decision within the timeframe we've committed to."

The decision not to take interim action in the river does not affect the removal assessment currently being conducted for Rogers Island. Soil and sediment samples taken this fall are now being analyzed. A decision regarding possible remediation of Rogers Island PCBs will be announced next spring.

The greatest risk of exposure to PCBs is through the consumption of fish caught in the Hudson River. EPA recently gave New York State \$168,000 in grant money to expand the state's efforts to educate the public about its advisories against eating PCB-contaminated fish from the Hudson River. Fish taken from some sections of the river should not be eaten by anyone, and women of child-bearing age and children under

the age of 15 years should not eat any fish caught below the Sherman Island Dam located just above Glens Falls, New York. Further information about fish consumption advisories is available at EPA's Hudson River Website ([www.epa.gov/hudson](http://www.epa.gov/hudson)).

Because of PCB contamination, a 200-mile stretch of the Hudson River, from Hudson Falls in Washington County to the river's mouth at New York Harbor, has been declared a Superfund site. It is estimated that more than one million pounds of PCBs were discharged into the Hudson River from two General Electric (GE) capacitor manufacturing plants in Fort Edward and Hudson Falls, New York during the 30-year period ending in 1977.

PCBs are known to cause cancer in animals and probably cause cancer in humans. PCBs found in Hudson River fish are among the most potent of all PCBs in terms of cancer. Concern about PCBs goes beyond cancer. Studies show that these chemicals may have profound effects on immune systems, neurological development and reproduction. Studies in animals have found altered motor skills, spontaneous abortions and low birth weight.