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**REVIEW of PUBLIC COMMENTS CONFIRMS EPA PCB FINDINGS;
GE REPORT FOUND FLAWED.**

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(#99001) New York, New York -- The evaluation of public comment on three major EPA Hudson River PCBs Reassessment reports, plus analysis of a separate GE PCB study, confirm EPA's previous conclusions about PCBs in the Hudson River, including the fundamental finding that Thompson Island Pool sediments are the primary source of the PCBs to the fresh waters of the Hudson River, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency said today.

EPA's Responsiveness Summary, released at the end of 1998, responds to comments on the Database Report, issued in November 1995, the Preliminary Model Calibration Report, issued in October 1996 and the Data Evaluation and Interpretation Report (DEIR), issued in February 1997. Comments came from other government agencies, community and public interest groups, individuals and the General Electric Company. The Responsiveness Summary for the Low Resolution Sediment Coring Report will be issued later this year.

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"The evaluation of comments on its reports has been valuable in helping the Agency further its understanding of PCBs in the Upper Hudson River," USEPA Regional

Administrator Jeanne M. Fox said. The Agency traditionally produces a comprehensive Responsiveness Summary at the conclusion of a site study or reassessment. The staggered issuance of Hudson River PCB summaries is part of EPA's effort to provide the public with the fullest information about the status and progress of the Reassessment effort.

A separate GE Report, "Thompson Island Pool Sediment Sources" (QEA, March 1998), was submitted in addition to General Electric's comments on the findings of EPA's on-going Hudson River PCBs Reassessment. EPA's analysis found that GE's report contains conclusions "which are in many cases overstated and, in some instances, not supported by the data," the Agency said.

As a result of comments and data received after publication of the DEIR, a number of corrections will be made concerning the movement of PCBs into and through the Hudson River. However the net result of these corrections is reinforced support for EPA's finding that TIP sediments are the primary source of the PCBs to the fresh waters of the Hudson River. In fact, estimates of the amount of PCBs entering the water as the river flows through TIP are higher than those originally reported by EPA.