



Hudson River PCBs Reassessment Phase 2 Modeling Approach

Peer Review Fact Sheet September 1998

In January 1998, EPA announced that it would conduct peer review of elements of the science used in the Hudson River PCBs Reassessment. This decision was based on a clarification by EPA Headquarters of the agency's already existing peer review policy. The recently issued Peer Review Handbook made it clear that peer review was necessary for various aspects of the Hudson River PCBs Reassessment, and that existing procedures for peer involvement through other agencies, stakeholders, and the project's Scientific and Technical Committee did not satisfy the requirement to conduct peer review.

The first piece of work in EPA's Hudson River PCBs Reassessment to undergo peer review is the Preliminary Model Calibration Report (PMCR), issued in October 1996. It must be remembered that the PMCR was an interim document, prepared to describe a **work in progress, that was not intended to be a conclusive report**. The PMCR represents the status of the preliminary modeling effort as of Fall 1995; datasets, database corrections and other pertinent information which became available after October 1995 were not incorporated into the PCB fate and transport modeling presented in the PMCR.

The peer reviewers are requested to determine whether the models being used to support the decision-making process for the Reassessment, and the assumptions therein, are appropriate. The peer reviewers are not being asked whether they would conduct the work in the same manner, only whether the work being conducted will yield scientifically credible conclusions.

Who makes up the Peer Review Panel?

Peer review will be conducted by independent experts who do not have any conflicts of interest relating to the Hudson River PCBs site and associated PCB issues. The peer review panel selected for this particular review is composed of independent experts.

What if independent experts can not be found?

If independent experts can not be identified, a balanced panel consisting of experts who may have some affiliation with the various organizations involved in the Reassessment is the second choice.

What work is under review?

Peer review is only conducted on the major scientific works that form the basis for a decision. The actual decision is **not** subject to peer review. The peer review for the Reassessment will be limited to certain aspects of the Phase 2 Reports. It will take place in two parts. This first part, the review of EPA's modeling approach which is taking place now, will ensure that we have selected appropriate models and are applying them in a scientifically credible manner in our decision-making process.

The second portion will be an interdisciplinary peer review of the scientific work contained in all four of the remaining Phase 2 Reports.

Will the Feasibility Study (Phase 3) be peer reviewed?

No. The Feasibility Study, which will include an evaluation of remedial alternatives against criteria established under the Superfund law and regulation for evaluating remedial actions, will not be peer reviewed.