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# Review set tonight of PCBs cleanup plan

□ 1984 denial of Hudson River funds to be reconsidered.

By Chris Sturgis

Staff writer

SARATOGA SPRINGS — The federal Environmental Protection Agency is taking another look at its response to the Hudson River PCB contamination beginning with a public meeting at 7:30 tonight.

In 1984, the agency recommended that no Superfund money be allocated to contain or remove the polychlorinated biphenyls from the river sediment.

In the meantime, the Cuomo administration is pushing a plan whereby the state Department of Environmental Conservation would dredge the PCBs from the river and bury them in a landfill.

More than one million pounds of PCBs were discharged into the river from General Electric Co. manufacturing plants in Fort Edward and Hudson Falls between 1947 and 1977.

Under the federal Superfund law, the agency is required to reconsider its "no action" decision at five-year intervals because of possible improvements in cleanup technology, said Ann Rychlenski, an EPA community relations specialist.

The process is formally known as a reassessment remedial investigation and feasibility study.

Rychlenski will be speaking at tonight's meeting in the Saratoga Springs Civic Center, 522 Broadway, Saratoga Springs.

She said she will be explaining the agency's Community Interaction Program for ensuring that issues of public concern are addressed as the EPA reconsiders using Superfund money cleaning up the river sediment, and, if so, how that cleanup will be done.

The agency will be inviting residents

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— Ann Rychlenski of EPA

dents to participate in three committees, one comprised of members of environmental groups, another committee of citizens' group members and a third committee of elected officials.

The committees will recommend issues for consideration to the Oversight Committee and the chairmen of the component committees will belong to a steering committee, Rychlenski said.

Five hundred environmental group members and elected officials have been invited to tonight's meeting, she said.

Already, the agency has received numerous telephone calls either urging it to dredge the PCBs from the river or to abandon dredging as a cleanup alternative.

"We haven't made any decision, either for or against dredging, we are at the beginning of a decision-making process," she said.

EPA remedial project manager Douglas Tomchuk also will speak. He said Wednesday that the agency has 56 different patented cleanup technologies to consider, including using bacteria to breakdown the PCBs, the remedy which General Electric Co. is touting.

Technologies that would take the PCBs from the river would also require the agency to dispose of the material removed, either through landfilling or incineration, he said.

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