

70572

POST STAR 9/13/91

Decker urges EPA not to dredge PCBs

By Don Lehman
Staff Writer

FORT EDWARD — The chairman of the Washington County Board of Supervisors on Thursday night urged the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency not to dredge the Hudson River to remove PCBs.

Darryl Decker, also chairman of a governmental liaison group working with the EPA on the reassessment of the river, told agency representatives present at a public meeting Thursday that data collected

seems to indicate a no-action plan would be effective in ridding the river of PCBs.

Dredging isn't needed because "the upper Hudson is improving itself," Decker said.

Decker's remarks came as the EPA held a public meeting to receive comments on the recently completed first phase of a study to reassess the EPA's stand on polychlorinated biphenyls in the river.

PCBs, a suspected carcinogen

See PCBs: Next Page

PCBs

From Page B1

were dumped in the river between 1947 and 1977 from General Electric Co. capacitor plants in Hudson Falls and Fort Edward. PCBs were used as a fire-retardant in transformers.

Close to 70 people listened in a rear room of the John Durkee Hose Co. as EPA representatives and consultants detailed findings compiled in the initial study.

The EPA decided in 1989 to reassess its earlier no-action decision

for removing PCBs from the river.

An EPA contractor first collected all previous study data, so the EPA could decide what additional information would be needed and come up with a decision on whether to dredge or not, said Doug Tomchuk, EPA project manager.

"We've looked at dredging and we've looked at not dredging," said Al DiBernardo of TAMS Consultants Inc., the firm hired by the EPA to collect the prior data. "We haven't made any conclusions."

DiBernardo said PCB levels have continued to drop in the river since

an all-time high in 1973. Currently, sewage and sewer/storm water runoff from the New York City metropolitan area is responsible for as much incoming PCB contamination as hot spots in the upper Hudson, DiBernardo said.

DiBernardo also said that EPA's findings point to continuing a fishing ban in the upper Hudson, which drew fire from Saratoga County officials later in the meeting.

Paul F. Lilac, Stillwater supervisor and also a member of the governmental liaison group, assailed the EPA for continuing its ban on fishing in the upper Hudson.