

... message for the Mayor to complain about soft money while spending taxpayer dollars to run self-promotional ads upstate."

portable in the streets. She says to me: "You don't live here. Our town is not what it used to be."

Some of the immigrant men living

lounge with a large-screen television and snacks so the laborers have a place to congregate inside. And there will be a food pantry and clothes

been remarkable — almost 90 percent during the 1980's, when the rest of the county's population grew by just 1 percent. In the 1980 census,

corded his performance. He would send the tape home to his parents and 10 siblings, who have not seen him since he came to America.

## Final U.S. Study Bolsters Case for Requiring G.E. to Clean Up Hudson River

By ANDREW C. REVKIN

Releasing the final installment in its eight-year study of Hudson River pollution, the federal Environmental Protection Agency moved significantly closer yesterday to ordering a costly cleanup of buried PCB's, toxic chemicals dumped for decades at two old General Electric factories in the river's northern reaches.

The agency has not concluded that G.E. will be required to dredge PCB's buried in the upper river, which could cost the company hundreds of millions of dollars. But its latest report expands the area of the river where contamination in fish poses an unacceptable health hazard to people eating them, adding the stretch from Troy south to Poughkeepsie, the segment of the river most popular with anglers.

The findings are more evidence pointing to the need for a cleanup, E.P.A. officials said.

Last summer, an E.P.A. report found that there were unacceptable health risks in the upper river, from Troy to the factories, in Fort Edward and Hudson Falls, 40 miles north.

The cancer risk from Troy south to Poughkeepsie is only about one-third of the risk estimated for people eating fish farther north, officials said. The risk from Troy to Poughkeepsie amounts to an additional 1-in-2,500 chance of developing cancer for

someone who eats a weekly meal of Hudson River fish. But it is still 100 times higher than the agency finds acceptable.

"These studies are like the columns holding up a temple," Ann Rychlinski, a spokeswoman for the agency, said yesterday. "They create an interlocking body of evidence. We see there is a problem, it's not going away on its own, and it comes from those old sediments."

Carol M. Browner, the E.P.A. administrator, has said that the agency will decide by the end of the year what must be done to clean the Hudson. But representatives of some private environmental groups said the agency had taken too much time. With a presidential election looming, any decision by Ms. Browner could be reversed in 2001, they said.

In the meantime, G.E. has spent more than \$100 million stretching the flow of PCB's from its factory grounds and from seeps along the river banks and has conducted extensive studies of its own, which it says show that the problem has been overstated by government officials.

Mark L. Behan, a spokesman for the company, said yesterday that the buried chemical deposits posed no risk to the river or to people using it, and added that G.E. was largely solving the contamination problem by cutting off new releases of PCB's to

the river.

He said that state health advisories already recommend that people strictly limit their consumption of most Hudson River fish and recommend that children and pregnant women eat no fish from the river.

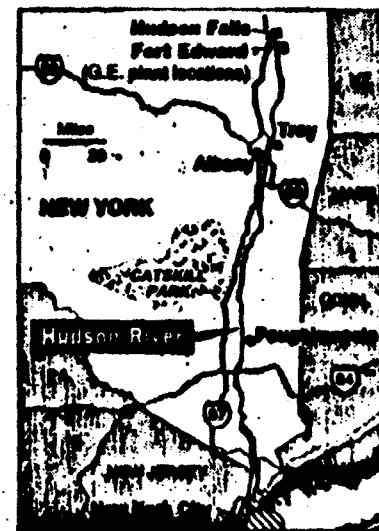
The latest E.P.A. study did not assess the health and dietary patterns of the people living along the river, but instead relied on calculations based on levels of PCB's found in fish and on cancer studies in laboratory animals, agency officials said.

E.P.A. officials said that their calculations were based on rules set out by federal pollution laws and that state advisories on fish consumption did not affect their conclusions about health risks.

PCB's, or polychlorinated biphenyls, were popular industrial chemicals until they were banned as a probable cause of cancer in 1977. Federal officials have estimated that the two G.E. factories on the banks of the upper Hudson dumped more than a million pounds of PCB's before the ban.

About 40 "hot spots" of submerged PCB's remain in the river north of a dam at Troy, and the E.P.A. contends that most of the contamination of fish comes from seepage from these deposits.

Scientists working for G.E. say



A study found PCB contamination extended to Poughkeepsie.

that the federal studies are flawed and argue that the PCB's in the river are safely buried and that the company's efforts to control leakage from the shores have already reduced contamination in fish.

The company, which is responsible for the cost of any cleanup under the federal Superfund law, has conducted an intensive research program and public relations campaign along

the river, rebutting each stage of the E.P.A.'s research.

Mr. Behan, the company spokesman, said yesterday that G.E. officials had not yet seen the new study and would file extensive comments once they were able to analyze it.

From the news release, he said, it appeared that "what we have is an estimate of theoretical risk based on conditions which don't exist in reality."

Representatives of several private environmental groups said the final report was a welcome sign that the federal government seemed poised to act to clean the river. But some criticized the agency for taking so many years to compile its findings.

John Cronin, the chief environmental advocate for Riverkeeper, a group in the Hudson Valley, said that federal studies had come to the same conclusions as long ago as 1973 — but nothing was done about it.

"What we're looking at now is 27 years of reaffirming that PCB's are a health threat in the Hudson, that the fish are contaminated, that PCB's are moving through the estuary, and they're not degrading," Mr. Cronin said.

"The question now," he said, "is will the E.P.A. have the courage and political will to act on its own findings?"

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