

70607



upstate travel.com

The Online Destination Guide to Upstate New York

Thursday, March 30

Local News

[Back to Main Local News Page](#)

EPA's models accepted

PCB cleanup slated

By Thom Randall, Staff Writer

SARATOGA SPRINGS -- A panel of seven independent scientists has concluded that the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's computerized models -- intended to predict the fate of PCBs in the Hudson River -- are acceptable, with some minor revisions.

The computer models are intended to help the agency decide how best to clean up polychlorinated biphenyl pollution in the river -- a result of GE's dumping of hundreds of tons of the oily chemical between 1946 and 1977. PCBs are a carcinogen in wildlife, and a suspected carcinogen for humans, according to the EPA.

While EPA officials said the results of the scientific "peer review" endorsed their work to date, GE spokesman Mark Behan said some criticisms aired at the two-day review session mirrored GE's concerns about the EPA models.

"I think the peer reviewers identified many of the weaknesses that GE had identified in the EPA's models, and made many of the same recommendations GE made to fix those problems," he said.

EPA spokeswoman Ann Rychlenski offered another view of the panel's conclusions.

"We're quite pleased with the results," she said. "The panel accepted our models with minor revisions, and that's the best you can ask for when you have two models this complex."

One of the two computer models in the EPA's Baseline Modeling Report predicts the future interaction of weather, water and silt flow with PCB river-bottom deposits, assuming no cleanup actions are taken. The other model predicts bioaccumulation of PCBs in fish over time.

GE has developed its own models, which indicate the PCBs are being buried in the river bottom and that PCB levels will drop below the FDA's safety limits within two years.

The EPA's models have indicated that river-bottom PCBs are washing downstream, and levels of the chemical will continue to be at an unacceptable concentration for decades.

Behan said that the EPA should have permitted peer reviewers to evaluate both GE's and the EPA's models side by side.

The peer group did suggest that the EPA collect more sediment samples from the river. One scientist warned that the loss of PCBs upstream means they were migrating downstream.

In December, the EPA is scheduled to release its recommendation for action -- if any -- to clean up the river.

Rychlenski said that the panel's dozens of pages of suggestions aren't likely to delay that decision.

In May, a last peer review session is planned, and it will focus on the EPA's hypotheses concerning the human health risks and ecological risks associated with PCBs.

Thom Randall may be reached at randall@poststar.com

[Back to Main Local News Page](#)

[Site Map](#) [Contact Post-Star](#) [Advertising Info](#) [Jobs @ Post-Star](#)

[Local News](#) - [Regional News](#) - [Nat./Int. News](#) - [Business](#) - [Classified](#) - [Community](#) - [Entertainment](#)
[Food](#) - [Health](#) - [Living](#) - [Obituaries](#) - [Opinion](#) - [Religion](#) - [Sports](#) - [Travel](#) - [Weather](#) - [Home](#)

Problems, comments, or need additional contact information? [Click here.](#)

© Copyright 1999-2000 The Post Star. All rights reserved.