



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460

DocId 70622

SEP 16 2001

THE ADMINISTRATOR

Mr. Edward O. Sullivan
Scenic Hudson, Incorporated
9 Vassar Street
Poughkeepsie, New York 12601

Dear Mr. Sullivan:

My thanks to you and the other members of the *Friends of a Clean Hudson* coalition who wrote to convey support for the proposed cleanup of polychlorinated biphenyls - PCBs - from the upper Hudson River. I am grateful for the opportunity you provided to benefit from the coalition's perspective on this matter.

I recognize the need for effective action. As you know, over the course of more than 35 years an estimated 1.1 million pounds of PCBs have been deposited in the river, exposing the environment to a substance that has been linked to cancer in humans and that bioaccumulates in fish. An estimated 500 pounds of this pollutant travels downstream over the Troy Dam and into the lower Hudson River each year. Clearly, the extent of this continuing contamination flow poses a clean-up challenge that Mother Nature cannot quickly handle on her own. I remain committed to cleaning up the Hudson River in a manner that is environmentally sound, is responsive to the concerns of the affected communities, and puts no one at greater risk of PCB exposure.


EPA is now circulating for interagency review a draft proposal that is similar in many respects to the December 2000 proposal, which would have involved dredging as much as 2.65 million cubic yards from the river. The revised proposal calls for the incorporation of a series of performance standards by which the progress of the cleanup would be evaluated. These indicators would include careful measurements of PCB levels in the soil, in the water column, and in fish, as well as calculations of the percentage of dredged material that gets re-suspended in the river water. EPA would closely monitor these and other objective indicators to determine whether modifications to the cleanup were scientifically justified.

I understand the importance of public input and involvement in the development of appropriate performance criteria. Since the cleanup was first proposed, EPA has received more than 70,000 comments from a variety of interested parties, many of whom live along the upper Hudson River and are concerned about the environmental and economic impacts of dredging. Recent studies conducted by the National Academy of Sciences and the United States Geological Survey have also prompted questions about these impacts. Following the issuance of the Record of Decision later this fall, EPA would establish a community involvement program to provide the public with opportunities for meaningful input throughout the various phases of the project.

To learn more about the proposed cleanup, you can visit the project web site at www.epa.gov/hudson. You can also call Ann Rychlenski, Community Involvement Coordinator for EPA's Region II, at (212) 637-3672.

Again, thank you for your expression of support. My best wishes to you and to all the *Friends of a Clean Hudson*.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Christine Todd Whitman", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Christine Todd Whitman