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## Hudson labeled troubled waters

PCB contamination again prompts conservation group to name river one of the nation's most endangered

For the third time in less than a decade, the PCBs lingering on the bottom of the Hudson River have made it one of the country's most endangered rivers, according to a report to be released by a Washington, D.C.-based conservation group today.

American Rivers, which has kept a most endangered rivers list since 1988, named the Hudson River the fourth-most threatened river of 13 in the nation this year. The designation comes less than a week before public comment ends on a \$460 million federal proposal to dredge a 35-mile stretch of river of PCBs, a plan the organization supports.

"Without the cleanup, the PCBs at the bottom of the Hudson River will pose a risk to the environment and public health for the foreseeable future," American Rivers President Rebecca Wodder said in a prepared statement released to be today.

Five years ago, the Hudson was fifth on the list of threatened rivers. In 1997 -- a year before it was named an American Heritage River -- the Hudson came in second place.

Rivers across the nation are nominated each year for the list by conservation groups in each state.

The Hudson River has turned up on the list repeatedly because of delays in cleaning up the 200,000 pounds of PCBs in the river north of the Troy Dam, according to Andrew Fahlund, a policy director with American Rivers.

Millions of pounds of the toxic chemicals were discharged into the river from the 1940s to 1970s by the General Electric Co. This past December, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency proposed to dredge 100,000 pounds of PCBs from the river -- one of the country's largest Superfund sites.

Since then, the public has been divided, and GE and the EPA have been at odds. A final cleanup decision is expected in August.

GE called the advocacy group's ranking of the Hudson a "joke" Tuesday.

"The Hudson River is cleaner than it has been in generations, yet American Rivers releases repeatedly the same phony press release that says the river is endangered," said GE spokesman Mark Behan.

Advocates maintain that the Hudson should stay on the list until the PCBs are removed.

"The Hudson should be on the list every year until PCBs are cleaned up," said Jeff Jones, communications director for Albany-based Environmental Advocates.

#### AILING RIVERS

The group American Rivers released its list of most endangered rivers, in this order:

The Missouri

The Canning (Alaska)

The Eel (California)

The Hudson (New York)

The Powder (Wyoming)

The Mississippi

The Big Sandy (Kentucky, West Virginia)

The Snoqualmie (Washington)

The Animas (Colorado, New Mexico)

The Lewis River-East Fork (Washington)

Paine Run (Virginia)

The Hackensack (New Jersey)

The Catawba (North and South Carolina)

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