

### *Congressman Says Dredging, Not Capping, Should be Used Wherever Possible*

*Washington, DC* - Congressman Maurice Hinchey (D-NY) today urged U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Administrator Lisa Jackson to ensure that high standards are used in Phase 2 of the EPA's ongoing efforts to remove toxic polychlorinated biphenyl (PCB) contamination in the Hudson River Superfund Site. Hinchey helped lead the effort to ensure that clean up of the Hudson River Superfund site would be paid for by General Electric (GE). From 1947 to 1977, GE dumped as much as 1.3 million pounds of PCBs into the river.

"PCBs cause cancer in humans, badly damage the environment and need to be removed from the Hudson River," said Hinchey. "That's why I've asked Administrator Jackson to set high performance standards for Phase 2 of the EPA's cleanup process. That means using environmental dredging to remove the contaminated sediments from the river whenever possible, and relying on capping, which encases contaminated portions of the riverbed in plastic, only when absolutely necessary. Doing this cleanup in the most effective manner possible is vital to restoring the ecology of the river, protecting public health, and allowing residents of the Hudson Valley to once again fully enjoy fishing and other recreational uses in this incredible American Heritage River."

In his letter to Jackson, Hinchey stressed the need for standards that are equal to or better than those used in the first phase of the cleanup effort. For decades, as a member of the State Assembly and U.S. Congress, Hinchey has helped lead the effort to require GE to remove the up to 1.3 million pounds of toxic PCBs it dumped into the Hudson during a 30-year period. In Phase 1, General Electric conducted dredging, with EPA oversight, and the company targeted 265,000 cubic yards (cy) of PCB-contaminated sediment. Dredging was conducted 133 days between May 15 and October 26, 2009. Backfilling and capping in some areas continued through November 2009, until the Champlain Canal closed for the season.

EPA classifies PCBs as probable human carcinogens, and these chemicals are also linked to other serious non-cancer adverse health effects including reduced ability to fight infections, low birth weights, and learning problems. PCBs, once released into the environment, accumulate in animals and work their way up the food chain to humans, a term called bio-accumulation. In 1976, because of the concern over the bio-accumulation of PCBs in fish and other aquatic organisms and their consumption by people, the State of New York banned fishing in the Upper Hudson River and commercial fishing of striped bass, as well as several other species in the Lower Hudson. In 1984, a 200-mile stretch of the Hudson River from Hudson Falls to the

Battery in New York City was classified as a Superfund site.

Hinchey's letter to Jackson follows.

December 6, 2010

Lisa P. Jackson, Administrator  
US Environmental Protection Agency  
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20460  
By Fax: (202) 501-1519

Dear Administrator Jackson:

I am writing regarding the EPA's ongoing efforts to remedy PCB contamination in the Hudson River Superfund Site. As someone who has advocated for this critical environmental remediation for more than three decades, I appreciate your agency's ongoing commitment to clean up and restore one of America's most significant and historic rivers. I remain deeply committed to the success of this vital effort, and I offer any assistance I can provide to ensure that it is done in the most comprehensive and effective manner possible.

Following the first phase of the cleanup that was completed in October, 2010, I understand that the EPA is currently considering and finalizing its performance standards for the second phase of this tremendously important project. As your agency establishes the performance standards and guidelines for the second phase of this critical project, I urge you to ensure that the cleanup requirements set forth by EPA meet or exceed the original performance standards set for the first phase of the project.

As I conveyed to the EPA on many occasions prior to the 2002 Record of Decision, I believe that after waiting many decades for the cleanup of the Hudson River, the federal government must insist on the removal of PCB contamination rather than capping it in place. While I understand that capping is necessary in certain specific areas where dredging is not feasible,

the EPA should not allow capping where additional dredging passes could effectively remove contaminated sediments. Capping where dredging is possible leaves in place contaminated sediments that require long-term monitoring and which are also prone to leakage and failure in the future.

I thank you for your vigilance and leadership in ensuring that the Hudson River Superfund Site is cleaned up effectively in order to restore the health of the Hudson River and protect those who live throughout our region.

Sincerely,

Maurice D. Hinchey