

Statement from EPA on Hudson River Cleanup

October 1, 2015

The Hudson River PCB Superfund dredging project has been a success. The \$2 billion dredging project removed more than 2.75 million cubic yards of contaminated sediment from the Hudson River. About 310,000 pounds of PCBs were removed from the river – more than twice what was originally estimated. The project was completed in less time than expected with less secondary impacts than predicted, such as re-suspending sediments into the water column during dredging. This project is the most extensive dredging project undertaken in the nation, and its success is a historic achievement for the recovery of the Hudson River. It was also a success for the local economy – providing about 500 jobs at its peak.

EPA appreciates that the Natural Resource Damage Trustees have been working on their claim for many years to recover some of the losses suffered as a result of the pollution dumped into the Hudson River. But the data cited by the Trustees are over a decade old. EPA is not discounting these data and in fact they were evaluated as part of a 2010 peer review and a 2012 review of the project. EPA has much more recent data from 2011-2013 that paints a different picture. EPA has been meeting and will continue to meet with the Trustees.

Should an agreement be reached between GE and either the state or the federal trustees in the future, then a temporary processing facility can be constructed at that time. The EPA has used temporary dewatering facilities at other sites across the country, so dismantling the 100-acre plant would not preclude future dredging.

The EPA has fought for the Hudson River too and has done its job by holding GE to the very stringent requirements of the 2002 cleanup plan and the conditions of the subsequent 2006 legal agreement.

For well over a year, the EPA has consistently stated that the plant would be dismantled when the dredging ended. The EPA has also expressed willingness to accommodate any agreement that may be reached between the Natural Resource Damages Trustees or New York State, including offering to share the years of technical expertise and experience that EPA has gained during this historic project by overseeing any additional dredging work. No such agreement appears imminent.

Because the EPA recognizes the importance of the Hudson River cleanup to communities all along the river, the agency took the extra step of inviting public input on the Processing Facility Demobilization and Restoration Plan, which details how GE will take equipment apart and decontaminate it and how it will address decontamination of infrastructure such as concrete slabs, roadways, train tracks and buildings. Earlier this week, the EPA agreed to extend the public comment period to October 5, 2015. The plan is located at <http://www.epa.gov/hudson>.