

August, 2017

Gary Klawinski
Director, Hudson River Field Office
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
187 Wolf Road, Suite 303
Albany, NY 12205

Dear Mr. Klawinski:

We represent businesses along the 200-mile span of the Hudson River Superfund site. The river is the bedrock of the Hudson Valley's current and future economic vitality. It drives the region's multibillion-dollar tourism industry and is in large part responsible for the ongoing recovery of the real estate market in the Lower Hudson since the great recession. The beauty of the river and the myriad parks along it contribute significantly to residents' quality of life and serve as catalysts for attracting visitors and new jobs.

Building upon this momentum depends on a clean, healthy Hudson River. As long as unacceptable levels of PCBs pollute its water, sediment and fish, they hinder lasting economic gains—both the resumption of once-lucrative industries dependent on the river and long-stalled development opportunities along it. More important, they continue to pose a threat to the health of people living in riverfront communities.

For 70 years, the economic, recreational, cultural and scenic values of the Hudson River have been compromised by PCB contamination. This pollution has destroyed a once-vibrant commercial fishing industry, hampered the operation of marinas, led to a severe curtailment of marine transport on the Champlain Canal, tripled the costs of dredging the NY-NJ Harbor, prevented ambitious economic development opportunities on the Upper Hudson similar to those being realized along the Mohawk River, and barred generations of residents and visitors from full enjoyment of this American Heritage River.

For these reasons, we call on the EPA to:

Declare in your Final Five-Year Review that the PCB cleanup “is not protective” of human health and the environment—as your draft review explicitly states.

Delete the draft review's forecast that the remediation “will be protective” in 53 years. You make this assumption despite your own admission that it will take eight additional years of research to verify.

Conduct additional cleanup of the Upper Hudson. Both the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and New York State Department of Environmental Conservation have concluded that without more dredging, it will take a century or longer for the Superfund project to achieve its goals. An “is not protective” determination will pave the way for the cleanup to continue.

Undertake a remedial investigation of the Lower Hudson. The draft review admits that upriver dredging has had no effect on PCB contamination in the Lower Hudson—in fact, it is significantly higher than expected. The final review must lay out a plan for investigating and removing this contamination.

Data confirm that time and nature won't fix this project's shortcomings, as your draft review would lead us to believe. Only additional dredging will make the Hudson healthy as soon as possible. Therefore, we strongly urge the EPA to conclude that the remedy for the entire Hudson River Superfund site is “not protective.” Then and only then can we begin to plan for the bright future our children and grandchildren deserve.

Sincerely,