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Hudson River Sloop Clearwater • Natural Resources Defense Council • Riverkeeper • Scenic Hudson

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**Statement of Campaign for a Cleaner Hudson
on EPA announcement of beginning of dredging season
May 7, 2015**

The Environmental Protection Agency today announced that General Electric will begin what it says could be its final season of dredging the toxic PCBs the company dumped into the Hudson decades ago. Here is a statement from the Campaign for a Cleaner Hudson, a coalition of environmental groups, civic organizations and individuals calling on GE to clean up more of its PCB hotspots:

“The Campaign for a Cleaner Hudson has urged GE to take on additional restoration dredging to clean up more of the toxic PCBs it dumped into the river. This additional dredging has long been identified by the Natural Resource Trustees as a potential project for the corporation’s next phase of responsibility to the Hudson River.

“Today, the EPA today made it clear it is open to further dredging in the Hudson River, which the agency previously has suggested would speed the river’s recovery. (See background.)

“Judith Enck, Administrator of Region 2 of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, also said today in a call with reporters that it “makes sense” to keep the cleanup infrastructure in place after 2015 if an agreement between key parties can be reached. GE has said it will dismantle its facility at the end of 2015.

“Our view at Cleaner Hudson is that GE poisoned the river for decades—turning its fish toxic, making its water unsuitable for swimming, and severely limiting its commercial and recreational activity. The corporation can hardly say the work is done and walk away from the cleanup at the end of the year with hundreds of thousands of pounds of toxic chemicals left in the Hudson.

“GE has a legal obligation to restore the Hudson River even after the EPA-mandated cleanup and that should include removing the remaining substantial toxic hotspots. Cities, counties and towns along a 200–mile stretch of the Hudson agree and 62 have passed resolutions calling on GE to repair the damage it’s done.

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“If GE doesn’t take this opportunity to finish the job and do it right, future generations of New Yorkers will be forced to continue bearing the costs and burdens of GE’s toxic legacy in the Hudson.”

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Background

For the past six years, GE has been dredging PCB-contaminated sediments from the Hudson pursuant to an EPA-mandated cleanup plan. This plan, however, excludes a number of toxic hotspots, described by other federal agencies as the “equivalent of a series of Superfund-caliber sites.” Expanded dredging beyond the current plan is necessary to remove these toxic sediments.

GE is now beginning what it says is its final season of the cleanup, but has not announced any plans to address this remaining pollution.

In its June 2013 five-year report on the PCB project, the EPA wrote: “EPA agrees that additional dredging would achieve RAOs [Remedial Action Objectives] in a shorter time frame thereby reducing the amount of time the ecological community would potentially be exposed to sediments at concentrations above the cleanup goal.

In the coming months, GE, the Natural Resource Damages Trustees, the EPA and other key players must come to an agreement to finish the job the right way in order to protect New Yorkers and restore this treasured resource.

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