



Legislation Text

File #: Res 1721-2001, **Version:** A

Res. No. 1721-A

Resolution in support of the Hudson River cleanup plan ("Alternative 4") proposed by the United States Environmental Protection Agency in its Hudson River PCBs Reassessment Project, urging the Agency to finalize the Reassessment by issuing a Record of Decision, and calling upon the General Electric Company to accept the findings of the Reassessment and to expedite the long-overdue removal of toxic PCBs from the Hudson River and thereby restore the River for the people of the City and State of New York and for successive generations of New Yorkers.

By the Speaker (Council Member Vallone), Council Members Miller, Michels, Carrion, Freed, Henry, Linares, Moskowitz, Nelson, Marshall and Fiala; also Council Members Harrison, Lasher, Leffler, Robinson, Sabini, White, Eisland and the Public Advocate (Mr. Green)

WHEREAS, The health, beauty and bounty of the Hudson River is critical to the economic vitality of the City and State of New York; and

WHEREAS, The Hudson River has been designated an American Heritage River, and the Hudson Valley as a National Heritage Area; and

WHEREAS, Approximately 200 miles of the Hudson River, from Hudson Falls to the Battery in New York City, is a federal Superfund site due to contamination from polychlorinated biphenyl (PCBs); and

WHEREAS, PCBs, which were banned in 1977 because of a variety of known and suspected adverse impacts on humans and wildlife, remain in the Hudson River, exposing humans and wildlife to their effects and are the most significant contaminants limiting full use and enjoyment of the Hudson River; and

WHEREAS, According to information provided by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) on its Hudson River PCBs web page, the General Electric Company dumped an estimated 1.1 million pounds of PCBs between 1947 and 1977 into the Hudson River at two of its manufacturing plants in Fort Edward and Hudson Falls, located approximately fifty miles north of Albany; and

WHEREAS, PCB contamination is responsible for the closure of Hudson River commercial fisheries and restrictions on recreationally caught fish, resulting in the loss of an important economic and cultural heritage of the Hudson River region, which continues to be hampered by the limitations on recreational and commercial uses of the River and the stigma of PCB contamination; and

WHEREAS, The EPA's Hudson River PCBs Reassessment Project, which commenced in 1989, determined in February 1997 that PCB "hot spots" in the sediment of the upper Hudson are the "dominant source" of PCB contamination of the River and that, contrary to continued assertions by the General Electric Company, microbial breakdown and other natural processes will not rid the River of PCBs, and the Reassessment has determined that without active remediation of the River sediments, the timeframe to reach acceptable risk-based levels of PCBs in fish will be delayed by a generation or more; and

WHEREAS, The EPA's Hudson River PCBs Reassessment Project has analyzed five different alternatives for remediating the PCB contamination in the River; and

WHEREAS, EPA scientists have identified the preferred alternative (Alternative 4) from among the five analyzed, which calls for a program of targeted environmental dredging of 493 acres of the upper Hudson, which will result in the removal of approximately 2.65 million cubic yards of River sediment estimated to contain approximately 100,600 pounds of PCBs; and

WHEREAS, Having identified the preferred alternative for remediating the River, the EPA must finalize the Hudson River PCBs Reassessment Project by issuing a Record of Decision, once all public comment on the Reassessment has been considered; and,

WHEREAS, The issuance of a Record of Decision by EPA is required before the General Electric Company, the party responsible for the PCB contamination in the Upper Hudson, may be compelled to commence remediation of the River; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the Council of the City of New York hereby supports the Hudson River cleanup plan ("Alternative 4") proposed by the United States Environmental Protection Agency in its Hudson River PCBs Reassessment Project, urges the Agency to finalize the Reassessment by issuing a Record of Decision, and calls upon the General Electric Company to accept the findings of the Reassessment and to expedite the long-overdue removal of toxic PCBs from the Hudson River and thereby restore the River for the people of the City and State of New York and for successive generations of New Yorkers.

