

GE To Study Hudson River Cleanup Expansion

Michael Hill, Associated Press

ALBANY, N.Y. (AP) — General Electric Co. said Monday it will study the possibility of expanding dredging in a contaminated portion of the upper Hudson River after a request by New York state Comptroller Thomas DiNapoli.

GE, which released poly-chlorinated biphenyls, or PCBs, into the river decades ago, is preparing to begin a fourth season of dredging as part of a federal Superfund project that is expected to cost more than \$1 billion.

Environmentalists have long been pressing for additional dredging of contaminated sections outside the Superfund site north of Albany. DiNapoli, acting as trustee of the state pension fund, in November filed a shareholder resolution calling on the company to analyze whether it would reduce its long-term liability by removing contaminated sediment outside the current cleanup zone.

A spokesman for Fairfield, Conn.,-based GE says the cleanup is achieving all of its goals and the company doesn't believe expanded dredging is necessary. But they'll answer DiNapoli's questions by the end of the year.

"This issue has already been studied exhaustively, but we have agreed to answer the comptroller's questions," said spokesman Mark Behan.

DiNapoli said he is withdrawing his resolution, which was filed in response to a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency progress report last summer that said PCB concentrations were higher than expected in some areas outside the project's footprint. The EPA said additional dredging would clean up the river faster, but it noted that other state and federal agencies have the authority to address the issue.

"GE deserves praise for getting in front of this problem and exploring the benefits of additional dredging," DiNapoli said.

The EPA says it's almost half way to its goal of removing 2.65 million cubic yards of contaminated sediment from a 40-mile stretch of the upper Hudson.

Crews are expected back on the river in May.

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