THE JOURNAL OF COMMERCE
WEDNESDAY, NOV. 10, 1976

GE Donates $3 Million To Rid Hudson of PCBs

ALBANY, N.Y. (UPI) — The General Electric Co. Monday turned over $3 million to the state department of environmental conservation as its portion of a multimillion dollar effort to alleviate PCB pollution in the Hudson River.

A spokesman for the department said the money was transferred according to the terms of an agreement reached in September between GE and the state to launch a $7 million program to deal with the problem caused by GE's discharge of polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) into the Hudson from its plants in Hudson Falls and Ford Edward.

ENCON Commissioner Peter Berle told an impromtu news conference the state was seeking bids from firms to "map" the river to determine where the PCBs were located.

The second phase, Mr. Berle said, would be a study to determine the costs of dredging and the alternatives to dredging and then recommend the best way to alleviate the problem.

Mr. Berle noted, for example, that dredging may stir up inert PCBs and thus cause more pollution. The cost of the study projects is estimated at $750,000, to be taken from the joint GE-state contribution of $6 million.

GE, in addition to its $3 million contribution to the cleanup effort, is spending up to $1 million in other research. Included is up to $400,000 to study the environmental impact of substitutes for PCBs, which are used as an insulating material in electrical devices.

The company also will spend up to another $400,000 for research and pilot plant studies on the removal or treatment of PCBs from the river and up to $200,000 for research on the impact of other substances which may be hazardous to the environment.

Mr. Berle noted that under the agreement reached between GE and the state, the company would cease entirely the use of PCBs by next July 1 and had agreed in the meantime to reduce the PCB discharge from the plants to an average of one gram a day by April 1977.

Mr. Berle said various studies would have to be completed before it could be determined how long it would take before the PCB hazard would be reduced in fish in the river. He said, for instance that the length of time for PCBs to leave the "food chain" had not yet been determined.

MONS 053146