56-67E WATER NEWSLETTER AND
RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT NEWS
E.O.W.

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THE GENERAL ELECTRIC COMPANY WILL CONTROL DISCHARGES of polychlorinated biphenyls from one of its two upstate New York plants by installing an activated carbon system. Permits have been granted by the N.Y. State Department of Conservation for construction of an extensive system that includes new piping and lagooning. PCB discharges from the other capacitor plant will be trucked to underground sites for disposal.

According to a state study, some 458,000 pounds of the PCB's are embedded in the Hudson River bottom with about 80 percent of them within 10 miles of the GE Fort Edward and Hudson Falls plants. Last year the river was closed to most commercial fishing because of high levels of contamination and the public was cautioned about eating Hudson River fish.

Dredging costs to clean up the pollutant are estimated at from $20-$30 million. The company had offered to pay at least $2 million in an out-of-court settlement with the proviso that the money not be construed a penalty but a research grant. Furthermore, GE asked the state to sign a stipulation that it would not be required to make "restoration, reclamation or other remedy" because GE had a federal permit for dumping and acted in good faith.

Hearings are continuing to determine if the company should be required to pay for restoration of the river. Although the State Environmental Conservation Department may not be able to order some form of reclamation, it could force the company to pay the entire cost of the cleanup by assessing penalties of up to $10,000 a day.

...LIQUID POLYCHLORINATED BIPHENYLS CAN BE DISPOSED of by high temperature incineration, the Environmental Protection Agency recommends. Waste PCB's can be burned for 2 seconds at 1,100 C with 3 percent excess oxygen or for 1.5 seconds at 1,500 C with 2 percent excess oxygen in the stack at useable incinerators identified by the Agency. Because incineration of solid PCB wastes has not been demonstrated, they should be buried in concrete at approved chemical disposal sites. Development of the recommendations were worked out by the EPA and Monsanto, sole U.S. manufacturer of the toxic chemical which has been found in excessive amounts in major waterways.

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