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GOVERNOR EASES STAND ON PCB'S

Overrules Reid and Gives G.E. Until 1977 to Meet Federal Standard

By LINDA GREENHOUSE

Governor Carey, overruling his Commissioner of Environmental Conservation, has decided not to force the General Electric Company to stop completely its discharge of the toxic chemicals called PCB's into the Hudson River.

Instead, Mr. Carey has decided to require the company to adhere only to the Federal standard for PCB discharges, which calls for no more than 3.5 ounces a day by June 1, 1977.

The company now discharges about two pounds of the chemicals every day from two Hudson River plants compared with 30 pounds a day from 1971 to 1974.

The Environmental Commissioner, Ogden R. Reid, has asked General Electric to stop the discharges completely by next Sept. 30, and he is conducting hearings on whether the company has violated state water-quality standards.

Mr. Reid's policy has been opposed by the State Commerce Commissioner, Joan S. Dyson, on the ground that a standard that was stricter in New York than in other states would weaken New York's competitive position and drive out industry.

Company's Position

General Electric has said that while it could meet the Federal standard for 3.5 ounces a day, a zero discharge was not feasible and might lead to a decision to close the plants.

Governor Carey's acceptance of Mr. Dyson's argument is the first concrete sign of the policy the Governor announced this month in his State of the State speech. At that time, Mr. Carey said that he would weigh economic considerations in the formulation of environmental policy.

Mr. Reid was informed yesterday afternoon by Robert J. Morgado, Director of State Operations, of the Governor's decision. The Commissioner was not reachable for comment.

For the state to require zero discharges of PCB's, one of the Governor's top aides said yesterday, would "put us on the same old self-destruct course" of creating an unfavorable climate for industry here.

'Issue Called Phony'

Furthermore, this aide said, "after all these years of discharging 30 pounds a day, no one can tell me there's one bit of difference between zero and 3.5 ounces."

"It's a totally phony, symbolic issue," he added.

Mr. Reid and Mr. Dyson have also clashed publicly on the implementation of a new law requiring developers to file environmental-impact statements.

PCB's — polychlorinated biphenyls — have caused liver cancer, reproductive failure and skin infections in laboratory animals. Hudson River fish tested by state and Federal researchers have shown PCB levels far in excess of the allowable limit of five parts per million set by the Food and Drug Administration.

Earlier this week the Monsanto Company, the only maker of the chemical, said it would phase out production as soon as acceptable alternates were available. PCB's are used primarily in the production of capacitors and electric generators.

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