Watch On Environment Where Will It End ?

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An historic and tragic event took place last week. In a speech delivered to a group of commercial fishermen in peekskill ,Ogden Reid,the State's Commissioner of Environmental Conservation,announced he would issue orders that fish taken from the HudsonRiver could no longer be sold because of PCB contamination. It will be the first time that the Hudson has ever been closed as a commercial fishery.

The very same day in Albay,Gov. Hugh Carey continued his beckpeddling stand on environmental issues and asked the Legislature to delay implementation of the State Environmental Quality Review Act. It was the same law he signed seven months ago with much praise. Painting a stark financial picture of the state's economic health, Carey asked the lawmakers not to do anything that would hinder business. He also called for a review of all state laws and regulations in order to revise those which "unduly stifle" economic development.

The issue of PCB's seems to concern the Govenor only for economic reasons and not because of the health dangers it represents. Since the controversy over their use began this summer,Gov. Carey has hindered Commissioner Reid every step of the way in seeking to halt their discharge into the river. Carey has insisted that PCB's were not so bad and that nothing shold be done to inhibit G.E. from making huge profits at its' plants at Fort Edwards and Hudson Falls. Presumably, stopping G.E. from dumping these toxic wastes into our waters and contaminating our fish would "unduly stifle" the. To that idea I say nonsense! Ahealthy economy can exist in a safe,clean environment. "There are alternatives to PCB's and we believe it is possible to work. Tis out,notes Mr. Reid.

Yet what of the health hazards we face now? And what will become of these fishermen,all of whom have invested heavily in equipment in anticipation of the spring season ? "We are a dying breed," commented one fishermen ,Don Hardy." We have one foot in the grave". So sad,but so true. And what of the thousands of people

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pleasure as well as for food? Anyone who eats striped bass or eel or whitefish or perch is also ingesting a substance which has caused liver disease,skin cancer and reproductive failure. Not a very appetizing thought.

At this point you might be asking yourself:What can we do to stop this poison from ruining our river forever? The answer,regrettably,is not too much. Write to your legislator and your Governor and express your outrage. Unfortunately in the world of power politics (which Carey seems to enjoy) your opinion and my opinion and the opinion of those commercial fishermen do not carry the weight of the opinion of a General Electric Big Business Fatcat. What to do then? I don't really know.

Such a long way we have come as people,and such a change we have brought about on this earth.When Henry Hudson and the other pioneers came here, this area was teeming with life and beauty,overflowing with every kind of fish and animal. Man came and changed all that. The eagles and the mountain lions have long since disappeared. As more of our earth is bulldozed and paved over for shopping centers and used as a dump for toxic wastes,how long will it be before other wild species disappear? How long will it be before we make our planet unfit for any living creature,including ourselves? When that time comes we will be able to proudly say (if there is anyone around to hear): "Yes,this is progress;we have civilized this wild country at last". In fact we will have destroyed our environment in order to "civilize" it. Not a very comforting thought inthis Bicentennial year.