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Carey Bids the Legislature Delay Environmental Law

Business Spur Cited

By IVER PETERSON
Special to The New York Times

ALBANY, Feb. 17—Governor Carey in a move to spur the state's sagging economy, asked the Legislature today to defer indefinitely the implementation of major parts of the State Environmental Quality Review Act, which he signed into law seven months ago.

In a special message outlining his plans for economic development, Mr. Carey painted a bleak picture of the state's financial and industrial health and urged the enactment of a number of other measures he said would return New York's competitive edge with other states.

The act, which is scheduled to become effective June 1, would require state and local agencies to compile comprehensive reviews of the environmental effect of any construction project larger than a certain size that it undertakes

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Reid to Bar Hudson Fishing

By RICHARD SEVERO
Special to The New York Times

PEEKSKILL, N. Y., Feb. 17—The state's Commissioner of Environmental Conservation, Ogden R. Reid, said today that he would issue orders closing the Hudson River as a commercial fishery for most species of fish because of their contamination by polychlorinated biphenyls, commonly known as PCB's.

Mr. Reid announced his intentions at a meeting he held with about 30 of the river's most active commercial fishermen and told them he would issue his specific orders within a week. It will mark the first time in the history of the Hudson River that it has ever been closed to commercial fishing.

The most valuable commercial fish affected by the ban are striped bass, eels, white perch, catfish and carp, all of which appear to have levels of

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REID WILL ENJOIN FISHING IN HUDSON

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PCB's that exceed Federal standards.

As for shad and sturgeon, which are migratory fish, Mr. Reid said, "I think we'll probably wait until we check early samples of the spring runs, see what levels of PCB's they contain, and then make a final determination." He acknowledged that he was not optimistic.

'Far-Reaching Implications'

Mr. Reid's action is expected to affect an area far greater than the Hudson.

"The implications of this are far-reaching," said William J. Dowd, marine biologist with the Roger Thompson Institute in Yonkers. "The Hudson is indisputably a major source of striped bass for the entire East Coast fishery from Massachusetts to Delaware.

"If these fish are not fit to eat when taken from the Hudson, then they are not fit to eat when taken off Long Island, the New Jersey coast and New England. It clearly points to the need for Federal intervention for controlling toxic substances and their effect on man."

A toxic-substances control act, which would empower the Federal Government to test new chemical compounds before permitting their use, has been stalled in Washington for five years.

2 G.E. Plants Cited

"We are a dying breed," said one fisherman, Don Hardy of Piermont. "We have one foot in the grave. How can we expect customers to buy our shad if they can't buy our striped bass?"

There are no exact data on how many pounds of fish are taken by commercial and sports fishermen each year, but it is believed to be well over a million, and some estimates run into multiples of that.

State environmental officials say the dollar losses to the state will also probably run into many millions, not only because of wages lost by the commercial fishermen but also because there will be less money spent on equipment and accommodations by all fishermen, whether they fish for a living or not.

For the more than 70 commercial fishermen who regularly work the river and whose income was always modest, it will mean looking for new jobs and a new way of life.

The fishermen were glum as the meeting ended. The start of the spring season is less than a month away and many said they had already spent large sums of money for nets and equipment.

"I've already spent $2,500 for nets and three new boats," said John Burns of Grassy Point. "Where does all this leave us?"

Howard Jordan of Stony Point said that, "preventing us from earning a living isn't going to remove PCB's from the Hudson. How can they permit General Electric to continue dumping this stuff into the river? It seems we they are depriving Americans of their health."

The PCB's, in the opinion of the Department of Environmental Conservation, are coming largely from two General Electric capacitor plants at Fort Edward and Hudson Falls, about 50 miles north of Albany.

Citing the toxic threat to the health of humans and wildlife, Mr. Reid said he would ask the Federal Environmental Protection Administrator, Russell E. Train, to order the plants to stop direct discharges of PCB's into the river by Sept. 30.

Mr. Train, the head of the Federal Environmental Protection Administrator, has backed the department and is also proposing "zero discharge," but now is willing to give General Electric ten months longer to achieve it. G.E. says it lacks the technical competence to meet either request. Meanwhile, an administrative hearing called by the state environmental agency to determine what G.E. should do is expected to resume shortly.

'Tommyrot'

The State Commerce Commissioner, John Dyson, and other state officials have criticized Mr. Reid, warning that the strict standards could prompt G.E. to relocate. Mr. Reid did not mention Mr. Dyson by name yesterday but said it was "tommyrot and ladder-dash" that New Yorkers had to choose between jobs and a healthy environment. "There are alternatives to PCB's and we believe it is possible to work this out so that G.E. can continue," Mr. Reid said.

He also criticized those who say G. E.'s proposal to discharge no more than 3.5 ounces a day by 1977 is reasonable. "That amount would impair water quality and we estimate that shippers would carry over four parts per million of PCB's as a result," Mr. Reid said. "Striped bass that eat the minnows would accumulate those PCB's to perhaps 11 parts per million. Saying that a little of PCB's don't hurt is like saying you're a little bit pregnant."

Mr. Reid asked David Seymour, president of the Hudson River Fishermen's Association, to head a committee to determine what steps can be taken to help commercial fishermen weather the closing. Mr. Seymour said he thought commercial fishermen might play a role in helping the state determine the exact extent and nature of PCB contamination in marine life.

Escaped Steers Block Road

TAYLOR, Mich. (AP)—A half-dozen 900-pound steers escaped from a cattle trailer following a predawn crash on Interstate 94 recently. Morning rush-hour traffic was blocked for 3½ hours in Taylor, a western suburb of Detroit. For four hours, policemen chased the animals down an embankment and into a makeshift corral of police cars. It was another 4½ hours before the steers were picked up in another truck and the wreckage was cleared.

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