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Fishing ban imposed

ALBANY (AP) — Because fish laden with toxic industrial chemicals pose a danger to public health, the state Wednesday banned almost all commercial fishing on the Hudson River from New York City 200 miles north to Washington County.

Ogden Reid, state environmental conservation commissioner, said he was imposing the ban because the federal Food and Drug Administration had found concentrations of PCB chemicals in Hudson River fish that far exceed its standards for safe consumption.

"It could take a decade" to rid the river of the chemicals, Reid said at a news conference.

The commissioner also indicated that after further testing he might extend the commercial fishing ban to Long Island Sound and Atlantic Ocean waters just south of Long Island, where many fish taken by commercial boats have been spawned in the Hudson.

Reid's Environmental Conservation Department has been trying to force the General Electric Co. to eliminate or sharply reduce the discharge of PCBs (polychlorinated biphenyls) into the Hudson from its two manufacturing plants in Washington County.

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