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GE 'willing' to curb flow

ALBANY, N.Y. (AP) — A General Electric Co. official says the firm is willing to build a pollution abatement plant to cut is discharge into the Hudson River of a type of chemical known as PCBs.

But Dr. Edward L. Simons, Ge's environmental protection operation manager, repeated GE's claim that it would not be possible to eliminate all discharges of polychlorinated biphenyls, as sought by the state.

Simons testified Monday as GE began its defense at a hearing before Columbia University law professor Abraham D. Sofaer, who is conducting the hearing for the state Department of Environmental Conservation.

DEC Commissioner Ogden R. Reid has warned against the consumption of fish taken from the Hudson River, saying that fish samples show potential dangerous levels of PCBs.

PCBs closely resemble DDT in chemical structure. They are used by GE in the making of capacitors at two plants in Washington County.

Simons said GE could reduce its PCB discharge to 3½ ounces per day by the end of 1976 through the construction of a "closed-loop" system to contain and recycle water used for cooling.

Simons noted that the National Pollution Discharge Elimination System has granted GE a permit to dump to 30 pounds of PCBs per day, but that the actual discharge is less than 2½ pounds per day.

Reid set up the hearings as part of an action aimed at eliminating all release of the chemicals and at obtaining an interim ruling requiring immediate reduction of discharges.

The level of PCBs found in Hudson River water is believed to be the result of direct flow from the Hudson Falls and Fort Edward GE plants and from seepage from landfills of solid wastes containing the chemicals.

A spokesman for the state said the GE proposal to recycle cooling water to reduce PCB discharges was a "new development," but the state spokesman did not discuss it further.

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