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Aid sought for fishermen caught in ban

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Stony Point Supervisor Lucien Conklin has asked that the state compensate area fishermen for losses caused by a ban on catching some species of fish as a result of Hudson River pollution.

The state Depaftment of Environmental Conservation placed a ban last month on commercial catches of striped bass and eel from the river. Also included in the ban are white perch, catfish and carp.

Department Commissianer Ogden Reid has said that the ban results from the contamination of the Hudson by industrial discharges of polychlorinated biphenyls — PCB's, which have been linked to cancer.

The conservation department believes that the pollution was caused by two General Electric plahts in Fort Edward and Hudson Falls, about 50 miles north of Albany.

Conklin said that the fishermen should not be penalized for an error that was beyond their control. He also said that he found it hard to understand how the plants could pollute the Hudson waters, considering the emphasis placed in recent years on cleaning up the river.

There are nine commercial fisbermen in Stony Poist and one in Haverstraw. Several also fish out of the Piermont-Nyack area. Conklin has suggested that the state compensate these fishermen for their loses, and seek re-payment from the polutors.

State Assemblyman Robert Connor (D-New City) said he has also contacted Reid on possible compensation opportunities. Connor said that he is now trying to calculate the total monetary loss involved for county fishermen.

"It seems to me to be completely unfair to penalize the commercial fishermen for something that they are not to blame for," Connor said.

Conklin emphasized that the banned fish will undoubtedly be caught in nets while fishermen seek permissible species such as shad or sturgeon and that much of their time and effort will be wasted.

"The river had been getting better and better each year, and then something like this has to happen. It just shocks everybody," Conklin said.

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