

For Immediate Release: January 31, 2018

For more information:

Margaret Byrne: *Margaret\_Byrne@fws.gov* 413-253-8593

Meagan Racey: *Meagan\_Racey@fws.gov* 413-253-8558

### **New report confirms decades of Hudson River water samples exceed safety standards**

Concentrations of polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) in Hudson River water samples collected from 1975 to 2014 exceed state and federal thresholds, and in many cases were hundreds of times higher than those regulatory criteria, the Hudson River Natural Resource Trustees report today. Exceedances have occurred throughout all parts of the river and for every year sampled.

“Injuries to the Hudson River from decades of PCB contamination continue to mount,” said Kathryn Jahn, Department of the Interior’s Case Manager for the Hudson River Natural Resource Damage Assessment. “PCBs released by General Electric have caused repeated and prolonged exceedances of state and federal water quality standards, contaminating surface water resources of the Hudson River.”

The January 2018 report expands water quality injuries from a 2008 injury determination and brings the total number of Hudson River water samples evaluated relative to the surface water criteria to more than 10,000. Approximately 85 percent of those surface water samples contained PCBs at detectable concentrations. PCB concentrations were often hundreds of times higher than relevant state and federal health-protective regulatory criteria.

Even the lowest measured PCB concentrations in surface water samples were many times greater than the more stringent standards, such as New York State’s 0.00012 ppb regulatory standard for the protection of fish-eating wildlife and New York State’s 0.000001 ppb regulatory standard to protect human consumers of fish. All the applicable standards have been exceeded at least once, and most standards were exceeded numerous times.

The report is the latest demonstration of the Trustees’ documentation of natural resource injuries from General Electric’s release of PCBs to the Hudson River from its manufacturing facilities in Hudson Falls and Fort Edward, New York. The Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act gives Natural Resource Trustees the authority to measure harm to natural resources, including the land, fish, wildlife, biota, air and water, and seek compensation for those injuries.

The Injury Determination Report for Hudson River Surface Water Resources will inform the restoration work needed to compensate the public for this loss. The Trustees may seek to restore surface water through the Natural Resource Damage Assessment and Restoration process by, for example, seeking protection for land along rivers and streams or reducing the amount of contaminants within the river.

To access the report and for more information, visit the Hudson River Natural Resource Trustee websites: [www.fws.gov/contaminants/restorationplans/udsonriver/index.html](http://www.fws.gov/contaminants/restorationplans/udsonriver/index.html), [www.darrp.noaa.gov/northeast/udson/index.html](http://www.darrp.noaa.gov/northeast/udson/index.html), [www.dec.ny.gov/lands/25609.html](http://www.dec.ny.gov/lands/25609.html)

**About the Hudson River Natural Resource Trustees**

The Trustee agencies are the U.S. Department of Commerce, the U.S. Department of the Interior and the State of New York. These entities have each designated representatives that possess the technical knowledge and authority to perform natural resource damage assessments. For the Hudson River, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration represents the Department of Commerce; the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service represents the Department of the Interior (including the National Park Service); and the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation represents the State of New York.

###