



COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION
WESTERN REGIONAL OFFICE

436 Dwight Street • Springfield, Massachusetts 01103 • (413) 784-1100 • FAX (413) 784-1149

MITT ROMNEY
Governor

KERRY HEALEY
Lieutenant Governor

ELLEN ROY HERZFELDER
Secretary

ROBERT W. GOLLEDGE, Jr.
Commissioner

February 25, 2005

Mr. Michael T. Carroll, Manager
Pittsfield Remediation Programs
GE Corporate Environmental Programs
159 Plastics Avenue
Pittsfield, Massachusetts 01201

Re: DEP's Investigation of the West Branch of the Housatonic River, Pittsfield
Site Number GESD02

Dear Mr. Carroll:

Enclosed is the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection's (DEP's) report on polychlorinated biphenyl (PCB) sampling of riverbank soils and sediments of the West Branch of the Housatonic River in Pittsfield. After limited sediment sampling of the West Branch by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in 1999, additional and more extensive sampling by DEP's contractors was conducted in accordance with a June 2000 agreement with the General Electric Company (GE). DEP's sampling activities focused primarily on an approximate 2.0-mile portion of the West Branch extending from just above the northern extent of Dorothy Amos Park (the Park), the entrance of which is on West Street, downstream to just above the confluence of the West and East Branches of the Housatonic River.

In general, the data indicate that the riverbank soils and sediments of the West Branch contain non-detectable to low (less than 1 part per million (ppm)) levels of PCBs, with two exceptions: 1) in sediments approximately 0.4 miles above the confluence, where EPA's sampling indicated sediment PCB levels at 60.5 ppm; and, 2) in the riverbank and sediments immediately adjacent to the Park, where DEP's sampling indicates riverbank soil PCB levels up to 8,900 ppm and sediment PCB levels up to 11 ppm. EPA's sediment samples immediately adjacent to the Park ranged up to 7,630 ppm PCBs.

The presence of PCBs in the riverbank soils and sediments of the West Branch is likely attributable to the former use of the Park, formerly the location of the Perlman junkyard, where

This information is available in alternate format. Call Donald M. Gomes, ADA Coordinator at 617-556-1057. TDD Service - 1-800-298-2207.

DEP on the World Wide Web: <http://www.mass.gov/dep>

Printed on Recycled Paper

waste and scrap materials from GE and other companies were sent during the operation of the junkyard.

A large portion of the Park was previously remediated by GE in 1998, in response to DEP's September 30, 1997 Notice of Responsibility. As part of these activities, GE removed soil from the top of the bank to the approximate mid-point of the bank for most of the length of the riverbank adjacent to the Park. The DEP data collected in 2000 indicates the presence of high concentrations of PCBs on an approximate 6- to 8-foot wide unremediated strip of the riverbank located immediately adjacent to the river.

While the strip area is located outside of the active park/playground facility and is separated from the facility by a chain-link fence, the levels exceed DEP's cleanup standards. Moreover, the PCBs that remain on the riverbank and in the sediment may be a continuing source of PCB contamination to surface water and downstream river sediments and biota.

Therefore, the Department is requiring that GE submit, within 30 days from the date of this letter, a proposed Scope of Work (SOW) for further response actions for PCBs in the riverbank soils and sediments adjacent to the Park, as well as sediments at EPA location SE000388 (DEP transect T 08700). The SOW shall include GE's proposals for additional sediment and riverbank sampling, as well as a schedule for implementation of the fieldwork and subsequent reporting activities.

Furthermore, the SOW should include monitoring of dissolved and total PCB concentrations in surface water both upstream and downstream of the Park and between DEP transect 08700 and the confluence, and further gauging and sampling of ground water monitoring wells at the Park.

Please do not hesitate to contact me with and questions or comments.

Sincerely,

Anna Symington
Deputy Regional Director
Bureau of Waste Site Cleanup

AGS/SJS
Enclosure

cc: Andrew Silber, GE
Richard Gates, GE
Roderick McLaren, Esq., GE*
James Bieke, Esq., Goodwin Procter*

Mr. Michael T. Carroll

Investigation of the West Branch of the Housatonic River

February 25, 2005

Page 3 of 3

Susan Svirsky, EPA

Dean Tagliaferro, EPA

Susan Steenstrup, DEP

Robert Bell, DEP (*electronic copy*)*

Thomas Angus, DEP

Dale Young, EOEAA*

Mayor James Ruberto, City of Pittsfield*

James McGrath, Director, Pittsfield Parks & Recreation

Commissioner of Health, Pittsfield*

Pittsfield Conservation Commission*

Housatonic River Initiative

Public Information Repository: Berkshire Athenaeum

Site File: GESD02

** without enclosure*