



THE GENERAL COURT OF MASSACHUSETTS
STATE HOUSE, BOSTON 02133-1053

January 24, 2024

[VIA EMAIL: tagliaferro.dean@epa.gov

r1housatonic@epa.gov]

Mr. Dean Tagliaferro
EPA New England
10 Lyman Street, Suite 2
Pittsfield, MA 01201

Dear Mr. Tagliaferro,

We write today as the State Senator and State Representative for all towns affected by General Electric's Housatonic Rest of River transportation plan. We are in strong support of the use of rail transportation for the transport of all PCB soils, whether to the Upland Disposal Site or out of state facilities, in all situations where it is technically feasible and safe to do so.

The transportation plan recently submitted by Arcadis on behalf of General Electric downplays the use of rail and highlights the use of trucks. This appears to be a proposal made with significant disregard to the short and long term benefits to the people and communities of our region. Our disappointment in this proposed plan is sharp and shared by the vast majority of the people and elected officials of the affected towns we jointly serve.

The emphasis on truck transportation in the plan presented on behalf of General Electric appears to be based on one factor alone, the ability of General Electric to reduce costs to cleanup a region it polluted and largely abandoned.

We see rail transportation as the ideal choice for this project based on several safety factors including reductions in vehicular traffic, vehicular emissions, and far less wear and tear of local roads. In addition, rail transportation would reduce noise, traffic, and other avoidable disruptions to the communities in our region, as well as improved outcomes for the health and well-being of the public.

The use of hydraulic dredging and conveyance would also reduce the truck traffic in the impacted towns because sediments dredged using this method can be moved to centralized staging areas. These centralized staging areas would, in turn, reduce the need for constructing haul roads and other staging areas. Hydraulic dredging and conveyance will assist in mitigating the already harmful environmental effects of the cleanup and fulfill our responsibility to ease the concerns of local residents and those visiting our region.

This proposal to utilize rail transportation will not eliminate trucks, but it will exponentially reduce the number of trucks while making the cleanup more efficient and economical. With this approach the length of the project could possibly be reduced from 13 years to anywhere from 8-10 years, further exemplifying the efficiency and economic advantages of rail. We hope the EPA will consider these factors and agree on the importance of rail transportation.

We urge the EPA to strongly consider the needs of our region and weigh heavily on the comments from the people and communities who have already been negatively impacted by the past actions of General Electric and stand to bear the brunt of the impact from the proposed cleanup. We stand in unity with our towns and residents to request the prioritization of rail transportation in all situations where it is technically feasible and safe to do so during the Housatonic Rest of River project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "P. Mark".

Paul Mark
State Senator
Berkshire, Hampden, Franklin
& Hampshire District

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Smitty".

Smitty Pignatelli
State Representative
3rd Berkshire District