



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Brad Hoylman-Sigal

## Senator Hoylman Holds Panel Discussion in Chelsea on Saving the Hudson River

BRAD HOYLMAN June 7, 2015

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*Environmental lawyers and advocates highlight threats of crude oil trains and pollution caused by GE dumping of dangerous PCB chemicals*

*Hoylman: "The Hudson continues to be threatened by the potential for a major oil spill and the presence of carcinogenic PCBs"*

NEW YORK – Last night, State Senator Brad Hoylman (D-Manhattan) hosted a panel discussion with environmental lawyers and advocates in New York City on what can be done to save the Hudson River from environmental degradation. The panel discussed the looming threat of crude oil trains and current efforts to call on General Electric to complete a full clean-up of PCBs from the Hudson River ecosystem. The panel featured Daniel Raichel, Staff Attorney for the Natural Resources Defense Council; Hayley Carlock, Environmental Attorney for Scenic Hudson; and Paul Gallay, President and Hudson Riverkeeper for Riverkeeper.

The Hudson continues to be threatened by the potential for an oil spill with thousands of gallons of domestic crude oil transported along the river, primarily by oil trains that if derailed would create an environmental crisis. Furthermore, the river continues to be riddled with dangerous PCB chemicals as the result of decades of pollution by General Electric. Hoylman, who is the Ranking Member of the Senate Environmental Conservation Committee, is currently circulating a letter to his colleagues to call on GE to take full responsibility for the destruction it has caused the river's ecosystem and continue its cleanup of PCBs beyond what has been legally mandated.

State Senator Brad Hoylman said: "The Hudson River is one of our country's most treasured waterways and over 15 million New Yorkers live in communities along its shores, including my constituents. Unfortunately, much of the Hudson River is classified by the federal Environmental Protection Agency as one of the nation's most contaminated hazardous waste sites due to the dangerous PCB chemicals that were dumped into the river by General Electric. Furthermore, the Hudson continues to be threatened by the potential for a major oil spill as thousands of gallons of domestic crude oil continue to be shipped along the river. It's critical that we take action to protect the Hudson from further environmental degradation and I'm very grateful to NRDC, Scenic Hudson and Riverkeeper for joining me to help raise

awareness and combat these threats.”

Daniel Raichel, Staff Attorney for the Natural Resources Defense Council said: “PCBs are one of the most persistent and harmful toxic pollutants known to man, and the millions of pounds of PCBs that the General Electric Corporation dumped in the Hudson River decades ago are still one of the largest threats to its health. GE is currently removing many of the PCBs in the Upper Hudson, but is planning to quit well before removing enough PCBs to make the Hudson a safe and usable river for all New Yorkers. GE must do more now to get PCBs out of the Hudson, or they will remain a toxic problem that our great-grandchildren will likely be wrestling with years into the future.”

Hayley Carlock, Environmental Attorney for Scenic Hudson said: "Through efforts of government, scientists, and citizens, and vast investment of public and private funds, the Hudson River flows cleaner today than it has in many decades. It is unthinkable that, as the Hudson is finally rebounding from its legacy of pollution, it has now come under threat from a crude oil spill that could erase the efforts of so many who fought to bring the River back to health."

Paul Gallay, President and Hudson Riverkeeper for Riverkeeper said: “About 25 percent of all crude shipments from in the Bakken shale oil formation passes through the metro New York/New Jersey area. The dramatic spike in the volume of crude oil being transported down the Hudson leaves it far more vulnerable to serious accidents. A spill of Bakken crude into the Hudson would be catastrophic for the public health and environmental health of our region. The Federal Government’s recent proposals to mitigate the potential harm are of little help. Put simply, these rules won’t stop the next bomb-train disaster.”

The Hudson continues to be threatened by the potential for an oil spill with thousands of gallons of domestic crude oil transported along the river, primarily by oil trains that if

derailed would create an environmental crisis. Oil train shipments to, from, or within the United States have increased over 1700% from 2010 to 2014, largely due to new crude oil production in the Bakken region (the Dakotas and Western Canada). In just the last two years (since July 2013) ten crude oil trains have exploded in the United States or Canada. Several of America's most majestic rivers: the Mississippi, the Yellowstone, the Ohio, and the Missouri have all experienced recent spills.

Furthermore, a recent explosion at Indian Point nuclear power facility leached at least 15,000 gallons of oil into the Hudson and there continue to be community fears over a crude-heating facility at the Port of Albany that would allow tar sands oil, the most corrosive form of oil, to be shipped down the river.

A negotiated six-year, \$1 billion dredging of Hudson River PCBs by General Electric is scheduled to be completed this November. However, concerns remain that even though the dredging may be completed, PCBs stretch beyond the mandated cleanup zone and into communities across the state, including the 60-mile Champlain Canal. PCBs are considered probable human carcinogens and are linked to other adverse health effects such as low birth weight, thyroid disease, and learning, memory, and immune system disorders.

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