NOV - 4 2015

Captain Bill Sheehan
Riverkeeper and Executive Director
Hackensack Riverkeeper, Inc.
231 Main Street
Hackensack, NJ 07601

Subject: Transmittal of Preliminary Assessment report for the Lower Hackensack River

Dear Capt. Sheehan:

On February 10, 2015, you petitioned the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to conduct a preliminary assessment of the Hackensack River under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act. A preliminary assessment is a limited-scope investigation of existing information designed to distinguish between sites that pose little or no threat to human health and the environment and sites that require further investigation. We have completed this assessment and are enclosing a CD containing the complete Preliminary Assessment report dated September 2015.

A key part of assessing a site for inclusion on the Superfund list is assigning the site a preliminary score using the Hazard Ranking System (HRS). The Hackensack River has been assigned a preliminary score of 50. Sites with final HRS scores of 28.5 or greater are eligible for placement on the Superfund National Priorities List. This preliminary score is based on existing information about the River.

The EPA evaluated contamination of sediments and when compared to the existing New Jersey screening values, cadmium, lead, mercury, benzo(a)pyrene, dibenzo(a,h)anthracene, PCBs, dioxin, dieldrin and other contaminants are present in the river sediments at concentrations that are elevated.

Before the EPA can make a final determination whether a site has a HRS score sufficient to list it on the National Priorities List of Superfund sites, the agency conducts a site inspection, which includes taking samples. As part of the site inspection, the EPA anticipates starting sampling in the river during 2016 and will use this information to inform its decision about whether the site qualifies for the National Priorities List.
If you have any questions or concerns on the contents of the Preliminary Assessment, please contact Mel Hauptman at 212-637-4338.

Sincerely,

Walter Mugdan
Director
Emergency and Remedial Response Division

Enclosure