

**UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY  
EPA NEW ENGLAND  
5 POST OFFICE SQUARE, BOSTON, MA 02109-3912**

**PUBLIC NOTICE AND OPPORTUNITY TO COMMENT**

**DRAFT REVISED 2020 MODIFICATION TO THE 2016 REISSUED RCRA PERMIT  
UNDER THE RESOURCE CONSERVATION AND RECOVERY ACT (RCRA) AS  
AMENDED (42 U.S.C. SECTION 6901 ET SEQ.)**

Permittee: General Electric Company  
1 Plastics Avenue  
Pittsfield, Massachusetts 01201  
EPA I.D. No. MAD002084093

ATTENTION: This public notice announces the start of a forty-five-day comment period, from July 14 through August 28, 2020, for interested persons to submit written comments on the Proposed Remedial Action (also known as the proposed cleanup plan) for the “Rest of River” portion of the Housatonic River. The Proposed Remedial Action, which consists of a Draft Revised 2020 Modification to the 2016 Reissued RCRA Permit (Draft Revised 2020 Permit), and its accompanying Statement of Basis, is EPA’s proposal to address the river’s sediment and floodplain PCB contamination beginning in Pittsfield, MA and extending into CT.

Purpose: The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has issued proposed revisions to the cleanup plan for the “Rest of River” portion of the Housatonic River which will result in faster and more comprehensive cleanup activity in the river and floodplain.

EPA is accepting public comments and will conduct a public hearing on the changes contained in the proposed revision to the cleanup plan to address the impacts of PCBs released to the Housatonic River from the GE-Pittsfield/Housatonic River site. The comment period is on the proposed changes to the RCRA Permit Modification which EPA issued in 2016. The Draft Revised 2020 Permit along with a Statement of Basis explaining those revisions are available for public review and comment via EPA’s website at [www.epa.gov/ge-housatonic](http://www.epa.gov/ge-housatonic).

The Draft Revised 2020 Permit is being proposed to address issues raised as part of EPA’s Environmental Appeals Board (EAB) decision in 2018, as well as a Settlement Agreement reached with stakeholders in February 2020. The proposed changes to the cleanup plan are among the topics presented to the public at three informational meetings in February and March 2020.

EPA’s proposed revised cleanup plan includes two primary sets of changes. First, regarding disposal of excavated materials, the Draft Revised 2020 Modification calls for the most contaminated soils and sediments to be shipped out of state to appropriately licensed facilities for disposal, while the remaining excavated soils and sediments with lower contaminant levels will

be consolidated at a local Upland Disposal Facility that will be designed for safe, protective disposal.

Second, the Draft Revised 2020 Permit also updates the cleanup plan to require the removal of significant additional contamination from the river system, lessen the burden on adjacent property owners, and improve the overall performance of the cleanup, including the following:

- Eliminate almost 100 acres of capping of river sediments (one-third of all capping in original plan), by removing more contaminated sediments in six different reaches of the River.
- Remove two dams downstream of Woods Pond (Columbia Mill Dam and Eagle Mill Dam).
- Following sampling, conduct a review of riverbank concentrations and erodibility in upper reaches, to consider whether additional bank soil removal is appropriate.
- Broaden the approach to remediation of vernal pools by testing methods for excavation and restoration of vernal pools as well as use of innovative non-invasive methods of cleanup.
- Conduct additional floodplain remediation on specific residential properties to eliminate the need for use restrictions called for in the original plan.
- Conduct additional cleanup for heavily used areas of the Massachusetts Audubon Society's Canoe Meadows property.
- Clarify certain Permit provisions regarding "Legally Permissible Future Projects or Work."
- Provide for a hydraulic dredging and/or hydraulic pumping approach with material from Reach 5C, Woods Pond and potentially in backwaters adjacent to Reach 5C and Woods Pond pumped directly to the Upland Disposal Facility, in order to further limit truck traffic as part of the remedy.
- Provide for an enhanced Quality of Life Compliance Plan, which specifies five separate areas to be addressed during remediation: noise, air, odor, light; recreational activities; road use and transport-related impacts; coordination with impacted residents/landowners; and community health and safety.
- Require GE to work cooperatively with Massachusetts, the City of Pittsfield, and Berkshire County towns to facilitate their enhancement of recreational activities in areas slated for remediation.

#### Comments Accepted:

EPA is accepting written comments on the Draft Revised 2020 Permit from July 14 through August 28, 2020. Oral comments on the Draft Revised 2020 Permit will also be accepted during the August 26, 2020 virtual Public Hearing.

The Administrative Record, which includes all documents that EPA has considered or relied upon in proposing these revisions to the cleanup plan, including all data submitted by the Permittee, General Electric Company, is available on EPA's website at <https://www.epa.gov/ge-housatonic>. Also, depending on the status of public access to the EPA office, EPA intends to make available the Administrative Record for public review and comment at the EPA Records and Information Center, 5 Post Office Square, First Floor, Boston, MA 02109-3912. Please contact EPA for availability of review at the EPA office. Also, depending on their operational

status, the Administrative Record will also be accessible via computer at the following locations (please check operational status of these facilities prior to visiting):

Berkshire Athenaeum Public Library  
Reference Department  
Pittsfield, MA 01201  
(413) 499-9480

David M. Hunt Library  
63 Main St.  
P.O. Box 217  
Falls Village, CT 06031  
(860) 824-7242

Housatonic Valley Association  
Cornwall Bridge, CT 06754  
(860) 672-6678

Information is also available for review on-line at [www.epa.gov/ge-housatonic](http://www.epa.gov/ge-housatonic).

To provide EPA with your written comments about the Draft Revised 2020 Permit, please email ([r1housatonic@epa.gov](mailto:r1housatonic@epa.gov)), fax (617-918-0028) or mail comments, postmarked no later than August 28, 2020 to:

GE-Housatonic River Site Public Comments  
EPA Region 1  
5 Post Office Square (Mail Code SEMD-07-01)  
Boston, MA 02109-3912

EPA is only seeking public comment on the proposed changes contained in the Draft Revised 2020 Modification to the Permit issued in 2016. All other cleanup requirements in the 2016 Permit remain unchanged. For convenience, the changes are in redline/strikeout format.

Public Hearing:

As a follow up to the three public informational meetings held in February and March in Lee, Great Barrington, and Pittsfield, EPA will host a formal Public Hearing to allow an opportunity to provide oral comments for the record. In order to adhere to guidance from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and state and local restrictions on large gatherings, this hearing will be conducted virtually and can be accessed on-line or via telephone.

The virtual Public Hearing will be held August 26, 2020. EPA will provide a brief overview of the proposed permit changes, followed by an opportunity for the public to make comments for the record. These comments will be recorded, transcribed, and included in the site Administrative Record. Written responses to comments will be included as part of EPA's final Permit decision. Details about how to participate in the virtual formal Public Hearing will be posted at the website

at <https://www.epa.gov/ge-housatonic>. For further information on the Hearing and how to comment, you may also contact:

ZaNetta Purnell  
EPA Region 1 - New England  
Superfund Community Involvement  
617-918-1306  
[purnell.zanetta@epa.gov](mailto:purnell.zanetta@epa.gov)