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**CONTACT: Jennifer Post**  
(518) 457-5400

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### **PCB CLEANUP ENDS IN CUMBERLAND BAY**

20,000 Pounds of PCBs in Contaminated Paper Sludge Removed From Lake Champlain

New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) Commissioner John P. Cahill today announced the successful completion of a dredging project that has resulted in the removal of more than 20,000 pounds of PCBs from Cumberland Bay in Lake Champlain.

“The dredging project in Cumberland Bay has been a tremendous success that will greatly improve water quality and the overall health of Lake Champlain, one of the State’s most treasured water resources,” Commissioner Cahill said. “The removal of more than 20,000 pounds of PCBs from the lake bottom and the restoration of wetlands along the shore will help ensure healthy populations of fish and wildlife and allow New Yorkers and visitors to fully enjoy all of the recreational and economic benefits that the lake provides.”

The project, which began in *May* of 1999 used hydraulic dredging equipment to remove more than 195,000 cubic yards, or roughly *140,000* tons, of *dewatered* PCB-contaminated paper sludge from a 50-acre area of Cumberland Bay. The contaminated sludge was dewatered and disposed offsite at approved facilities.

DEC’s contractor, Severson Environmental Services (SES) of Niagara Falls, Niagara County completed the dredging work on October 19, 2000 and *is removing its equipment from the site.*

The project also called for the restoration of approximately 7 acres of wetlands that were *also contaminated with PCBs.* The restoration work was completed on October 25. The final cost of the entire project is estimated to be between \$30-35 million.

The cleanup was funded through the State Superfund and *several* millions of dollars provided by the Georgia-Pacific Corporation as a result of a consent order signed in 1997. As part of that order, the State retained the right to seek natural resources damages claims against any party that is potentially responsible for the contamination.

The Cumberland Bay sludge bed was composed of wood pulp, wood chip debris and related processing wastes from wood products industries in and around the City of Plattsburgh. The wastes either settled there or were directly discharged into this area of the bay for several decades until 1973 when the city’s sewage treatment plant began treating wastes from local industries. Sampling and analysis conducted from 1992 to 1994 found PCB and other contamination in the sludge. The site was listed on the State’s Registry of Inactive Hazardous Waste Disposal Sites in November 1994.

The sampling also found higher than accepted concentrations of PCBs in yellow perch in

Cumberland Bay. In 1995, a fish consumption advisory was expanded to include yellow perch and a ban on the sale of yellow perch from Cumberland Bay was ordered by the State.

DEC anticipates that the removal of PCBs from Cumberland Bay will allow the health advisory on fish consumption to end within the next few years.

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