

2 meetings set on asp

EPA plans public hearing on 2nd phase

By Natalie White
Standard-Times staff writer

NEW BEDFORD — The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency will hold a public hearing Thursday to collect comments on its plan to dredge and bury PCB-tainted sludge from 165 acres of the Acushnet River and New Bedford Harbor.

If approved, this would be the second stage of cleanup for the harbor. Preparations for the first stage, dredging and burning five acres of the most severely contaminated "hot spots," have already begun.

The harbor and river, contaminated with some of the highest levels of polychlorinated biphenyls in the country, were named to the national hazardous waste Superfund sites in 1982. The manufacture of the chemical was banned in the late 1970s.

The proposed second stage is a \$33 million project calling for the sludge to be buried and sealed off in coves

along the Acushnet River, on both the Fairhaven and New Bedford banks.

After collecting comments, the EPA will review the plan and make a final decision.

The hearing will be held at 7:30 p.m. at the Day's Inn on Hathaway Road. Copies of the proposed plan are available at the downtown and Wilks Branch of the New Bedford Free Public Library and the Millicent Library in Fairhaven. Copies are also available at the EPA's Records Center in Boston.

A stenographer will record oral comments at the hearing after EPA officials make a brief presentation of the proposal.

The EPA is also seeking written comments, which should be mailed to Gayle Garmon (HRM-CAN3), Remedial Project Manager, U.S. EPA, JFK Federal Building, Boston 02203. Written comments must be postmarked no later than March 31.

One wore a yellow jacket. made after the district saw its application

ects of harbor cleanup

Workshop to explore Phase 1 alternatives

By Natalie White
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NEW BEDFORD — A workshop on advances in alternative technologies to burning PCB-contaminated sludge will be held Thursday.

Sponsored by Rep. Gerry E. Studds, D-Mass., the workshop will begin at 2 p.m. at the New Bedford Chamber of Commerce conference room.

The congressman began organizing the forum a few weeks ago, after protests from citizens' groups opposed to the EPA's plan to burn sludge from five acres of severely contaminated "hot spots" in the Acushnet River.

EPA officials have said they will attend the workshop but hold little hope of finding an alternative method that will deal with the high level of PCBs in the hot spots.

However, Rep. Studds said he wants the EPA to explore advances made in the last few years since the agency announced its plan to set up an incinerator at the

foot of Sawyer Street. Work has already begun on the project, and the EPA said burning is expected to begin by the end of 1992 or the beginning of 1993.

"It is an opportunity to focus on alternatives to incineration which may — or may not — hold the key to a clean New Bedford Harbor," the congressman said in his letter of invitation.

Representatives of several companies working on technologies to remove PCBs will be at the workshop. Also invited are state, city and town officials and community groups.

The harbor was put on the EPA's Superfund list in 1982, and the agency has determined the chemical is a probable human carcinogen. Burning the sludge, which the EPA estimates would take two to four months, would remove nearly half of the pollutants.

But opponents object to incineration, saying the emissions may create another pollution problem.