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July 17, 2003

Mr. Andrew T. Silfer
Corporate Environmental Programs
General Electric Company
100 Woodlawn Avenue
Pittsfield, MA 01201

Via Electronic and U.S. Mail

Re: Comments on General Electric's May 2003 *Revised Pre-Design Investigation Work Plan for Unkamet Brook Area Removal Action*, GE-Pittsfield/Housatonic River Site, Pittsfield, Massachusetts.

Dear Mr. Silfer:

This letter contains the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) conditional approval of the pre-design investigation activities described in the above-referenced *Revised Pre-Design Investigation Work Plan for Unkamet Brook Area Removal Action* (PDIWP). The PDIWP is subject to the terms and conditions specified in the Consent Decree (CD) that was entered in U.S. District Court on October 27, 2000.

GE submitted a *Pre-Design Investigation Work Plan for Unkamet Brook Area Removal Action* dated November 2002. By a letter dated March 10, 2003, EPA approved the November 2002 Work Plan subject to the conditions presented in that letter and required the submission of a revised PDIWP.

Pursuant to Paragraph 73 of the CD, EPA, after consultation with the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MDEP), approves the Revised PDIWP subject to the conditions presented in this letter and in EPA's March 10, 2003 conditional approval letter.

General Conditions

1. In Section 2.2, General Electric (GE) states "the CD and SOW identify certain areas within the Unkamet Brook RAA that are excluded from pre-design soil investigations, including soils located beneath existing buildings, soil beneath paved portions of public roadways and beneath active rail lines..."

The Statement of Work (SOW, Appendix E to the CD) addresses circumstances where Remedial Action Areas (RAAs) contain or are bounded by public roadways, and specifies that "response actions will extend to the edge of the road pavement, and the road pavement (and the underlying soils) will not be considered part of the RAA." Neither the CD or SOW contains language excluding soil beneath active rail lines from pre-design soil investigations. However, Comment 1 of EPA's March 10, 2003 letter does state that GE "may omit sampling in the ballast of active rail lines."

For purposes of estimating sampling locations in the East Area of the RAA, GE has assumed that the ballast extends ten feet on either side of the rail lines. Consequently, no samples are proposed in those areas, thus eliminating from the characterization three boring locations (E-X14, E-HH12 and E-NN10) and 7 surface soil grid locations (E-W14, E-CC13, E-EE13, E-

FF13, E-II12, E-KK11 and E-OO10). GE shall field verify with EPA oversight the actual location of the active rail line (to the edge of ballast) relative to the grid locations, and, relocate samples as needed to allow sample collection adjacent to the edge of the ballast.

2. In Section 4.2.5, GE states that the boundary of Unkamet Brook is the mean annual high-water line (MAHW line), and tables and figures have been revised to reflect this definition. However, it is not clear how GE has distinguished sampling points as either Unkamet Brook sediments or soils. GE shall conduct a field evaluation with EPA oversight to assess the MAHW line, in accordance with MDEP's Wetlands Regulations, 310 CMR 10.58(2)a.2, which state:

[The] mean annual high water line is the line that is apparent from visible markings or changes in the character of soils or vegetation due to the prolonged presence of water and that distinguishes between predominantly aquatic and predominantly terrestrial land. Field indicators of bankfull conditions shall be used to determine the mean annual high-water line. Bankfull field indicators include but are not limited to: changes in slope, changes in vegetation, stain lines, top of pointbars, changes in bank materials, or bank undercuts.

- (a) In most rivers, the first observable break in slope is coincident with bankfull conditions and the mean annual high-water line.
- (b) In some river reaches, the mean annual high-water line is represented by bankfull field indicators that occur above the first observable break in slope, or if no observable break in slope exists, by other bankfull field indicators.

3. GE has relocated several soil sampling locations to fall within each of the two branches of the unnamed brook, in the East Area of the RAA. Prior to sample collection, GE shall confirm that these sampling locations are actually within the unnamed brook, and relocate these samples, as necessary, to fall within the unnamed brook.
4. EPA has reviewed the distribution of soil borings within the utility corridors in both the GE-owned recreational area and the non-GE-owned areas. Coverage of the corridors in these areas is adequate, with the following exceptions which shall be sampled during the implementation of the Work Plan:
 - a) In the East Area, GE shall: (a) convert surface sample E-EE4 to a boring to address a short reach of storm sewer that has no sampling coverage; and, (b) relocate boring E-D24 50 feet to the southeast, to address the northern end of Building OP-3 (where there is currently a gap of approximately 200 linear feet between borings) and return the location of boring E-D22 to the grid node.
 - b) In the North Area, specifically the GE-owned non-industrial area, GE shall convert samples N-N10, N-BB24 and N-DD26 to borings (to a depth of 6 feet) to provide characterization of the sanitary sewer line extending from Dalton Avenue to Merrill Road.
5. GE has proposed sampling locations for the non-PCB constituents listed in Appendix IX of 40 CFR Part 264, plus benzidine, 2-chloroethylvinyl ether, and 1,2-diphenylhydrazine, excluding pesticides and herbicides (referred to as Appendix IX+3). EPA has reviewed the proposed locations and requires the following revisions:

- a) West Area -
 - i) 0- to 1-foot depth interval: relocate sample W-M11 to W-G4.
 - ii) For the 1- to 6-foot and 6- to 15-foot depth intervals: relocate sample W-M11 to W-K11.

- b) North Area -
 - i) 0- to 1-foot depth interval: relocate sample N-AA28 to N-JJ22.
 - ii) 1- to 6-foot depth interval: relocate sample N-JJ20 to N-JJ22.
 - iii) 6- to 15-foot depth interval: relocate sample N-O7 to N-EE18 and N-KK5 to N-II20.

- c) East Area -
 - i) 0- to 1-foot depth interval: relocate samples E-J28 to E-L28; E-F20 to E-I18; E-M15 to E-N16; E-O16 to E-O15; E-R16 to E-R15; E-S19 to E-R19; E-V20 to E-V19; E-U16 to E-X15; E-AA20 to E-AA22; E-DD20 to E-CC22; E-DD21 to E-DD18; E-EE14 to E-FF16; E-II14 to E-II13; E-JJ15 to E-LL16; E-LL22 to E-NN22; E-LL12 to E-MM11; E-OO12 to E-OO11; E-RR15 to E-QQ15; E-QQ24 to E-QQ23; E-SS20 to E-SS18; E-BB6 to E-EE12; and, E-KK9 to E-BB13.
 - ii) 1- to 6-foot depth interval: relocate samples E-P14 to E-P15; E-V20 to E-X18; E-JJ14 to E-II13. Exchange the proposed analytical suites between the following samples: E-V18 and E-X16; E-HH16 and E-HH24; and, E-RR24 and E-NN16. Add 1- to 6-foot depth interval samples at E-R13 and E-HH11 (3- to 6-foot depth interval only).
 - iii) 6- to 15-foot depth interval: relocate samples E-JJ14 to E-II13 and E-XX24 to E-X15. Add a sample at E-P15.

6. Sample location N-E23 was incorporated in the Revised PDIWP, instead of location N-F23 (specified in Comment 3a of EPA's March 10, 2003 letter addressing the November 2002 PDIWP). GE shall sample at grid node N-F23, instead of the proposed N-E23, to ensure adequate sample distribution.

7. Representatives from EPA and MDEP shall conduct a site-walk with GE personnel, during one of the upcoming monthly technical meetings, to identify the 5 soil boring and 15 surface sampling locations in the GE-owned non-industrial area for the EPA-designated polychlorinated biphenyl and Appendix IX+3 samples specified in EPA's March 10, 2003 conditional approval letter.

8. As stated in the March 10, 2003 letter, with respect to future site conditions, EPA notes that soils beneath an existing building shall be subject to future RD/RA evaluations, and response actions, if necessary, should the building be removed, subject to the CD and/or applicable Environmental Restriction and Easement (ERE). The area underneath such buildings shall be a restricted area in the ERE for the Unkamet Brook RAA.

Within 14 days of GE's receipt of this letter, GE shall submit a letter to EPA confirming the scope of the sampling at the Unkamet Brook Area as modified by the above conditions, and providing revised tables and figures that are affected by changes resulting from the above conditions. That letter shall also contain a revised schedule for the work. That schedule shall provide that GE shall submit an Interim Pre-Design Investigation Report within six (6) months from EPA's approval of GE's letter and a Final Pre-Design Investigation Report within 12 months from EPA's approval of the Interim Pre-Design Investigation Report.

EPA reserves its right to perform additional sampling in the areas subject to PDIWP and/or require additional sampling or Response Actions, if necessary, to meet the requirements of the Consent Decree. If there is any conflict between the summary of the Performance Standards and pre-design investigation requirements presented in the PDIWP and the CD and SOW, the requirements of the CD and SOW shall control.

If you have any questions, please contact me at (617) 918-1268.

Sincerely,



Michael J. Nalipinski
GE Facility Project Manager

cc: John Novotny, GE
James Bieke, Shea & Gardner
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K.C. Mitkevicius, US ACOE
Dawn Jamros, Weston Solutions, Inc.
Pittsfield MA Office, US EPA
Mayor Sara Hathaway, City of Pittsfield
Public Information Repositories (4)
Property Owner, Parcel K11-7-8
Property Owner, Parcel L11-4-11
Property Owner, Parcel L11-4-213
Property Owner, Parcel L12-1-2
Property Owner, Parcel L12-1-3
Property Owner, Parcel L12-1-4
Property Owner, Parcel L12-1-5
Scott LeBeau, General Dynamics
MA Dept. of Highways, Rights of Way Bureau
MA Board of Regional Community Colleges
United States Navy, Northern Division - Real Property
Site File