**S.6893 (Harckham)/A.7208 (Levenberg)**

**Summary:** Prohibits the discharge of any radiological agent into the waters of the Hudson River.

**Statement of Support:** The Hudson River serves as a drinking water source for more than 100,000 New Yorkers. As one of New York’s “natural wonders,” the 315 mile long river provides access to fishing, swimming, and other forms of recreation for many. The river should be protected for countless reasons, and it is currently under threat.

Holtec International, the firm responsible for decommissioning the Indian Point nuclear power plant, has proposed a plan to dump 1 million gallons of radioactive wastewater into the Hudson. Holtec’s plan is to release water from the pools that contained spent fuel rods from Indian Point’s reactors, which stopped generating electricity in 2021. The potential release of these contaminants into one of New York’s most important rivers is an urgent matter, as exposure to toxic substances poses serious health and economic risks to communities. The wastewater contains tritium, a radioactive isotope that has been linked to cancer when ingested, inhaled, or absorbed through the skin. Holtec planned to dump the wastewater into the river in May 2023, but the company put the project on hold in order to take time to explain the plan to alarmed and concerned elected officials, community leaders, and residents. Holtec has not disclosed what is in the water, and the complete lack of transparency about the process has left communities in the dark. The company also recently had a federal violation in the treatment system at Indian Point.

Existing state regulations fail to address the discharge of radiological materials, so it is critical for state laws to protect our waterways. A.7208 would prohibit the discharge of any radiological agent into the Hudson River. The legislation includes a stipulation that violations would be met with fines of $37,500 per day, then $50,000 per day for a second violation, and $150,000 per day per violation thereafter.

Between 1947-1977, General Electric dumped more than 1 million pounds of highly carcinogenic PCBs into the Hudson River. Previous owners of Indian Point, which opened in 1962, released radioactive wastewater into the river for years. Today, as the result of federal, state, and local investments and actions, the river is much cleaner than it once was. After decades of significant efforts to clean up the river, this proposal by Holtec is egregious and foolish. Rather than discharging the wastewater, it should be securely stored on site while safer disposal methods can be evaluated. As we continue to confront threats associated with climate change, our waterways will serve an increasingly critical role in maintaining and enhancing resiliency. New York must prioritize the health and economic interests of its citizens and natural resources over Holtec’s financial portfolio.

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1 [https://www.dutchessny.gov/Departments/County-Executive/Dutchess-Ulster-to-Fund-Hudson-7-Coordinator-to-Safeguard-Hudson-River.htm](https://www.dutchessny.gov/Departments/County-Executive/Dutchess-Ulster-to-Fund-Hudson-7-Coordinator-to-Safeguard-Hudson-River.htm)