



Superfund lake to be cleaned up

Honeywell to spend \$451 million to remove pollutants in New York
MSNBC News Services

Updated: 7:46 a.m. CT Oct 16, 2006

SYRACUSE, N.Y. - Honeywell Inc. will spend \$451 million to help clean up Onondaga Lake, once a sacred American Indian waterway turned into a toxic stew by a century of municipal and industrial pollution.

The agreement announced Thursday is one of the largest legal settlements against a polluter in state history, said Gov. George Pataki and Attorney General Eliot Spitzer.

Honeywell will commit to a nine-year cleanup plan that calls for dredging 2.65 million cubic yards of contaminated sediment from the five-mile long lake on Syracuse's northeastern limits, according to a consent order to be filed in U.S. District Court in Syracuse.

Additionally, Honeywell agreed to seal 579 acres of lake bottom with a cap of sand, gravel and other material.

Governor: 'Critical cleanup'

"Although there is still work to be done, this agreement is an important step that secures a legal commitment to implement this critical cleanup project," said Pataki, a 2008 Republican presidential hopeful.

Honeywell, which makes products ranging from airplane electronics to antifreeze, is expected to have revenue of \$31 billion this year.

Much of the lake's contamination is the legacy of a former Allied Chemical Co. complex that closed in 1986, leaving behind mercury and other contaminants. Honeywell took over Allied in 1999 and became responsible for the pollution.

Last year, diversified conglomerate General Electric Co. agreed to pay \$111 million to the Environmental Protection Agency to help pay the cost of dredging toxic waste from New York's Hudson River. The government said GE had released waste into the river for about 30 years. (MSNBC.com is a joint venture of Microsoft and GE's NBC Universal News.)

Sewage problem, too

Meanwhile, Onondaga County is spending \$500 million on a 15-year project to stop polluting the lake with sewage by 2012. The county is under a federal court order to make the lake safe for swimming and fishing and comply with the federal Clean Water Act.

Onondaga Lake was once the spiritual center of the Onondaga Nation, one of the six upstate New York tribes that formed the Iroquois Confederacy. The great Onondaga Chief Hiawatha once canoed on its waters. In the late 19th century, the lake was ringed by grand resorts and amusement parks and was a popular sports fishery.

Today, it is one of only three lakes in the country listed as a federal Superfund site.

The Associated Press and Reuters contributed to this report.