

Dwight Aspinwall, Hanover, NH.
To Whom It Concerns at the FERC:

I am writing with respect to the relicensing of the Wilder Dam (P-1892). I live in Hanover, NH, and frequently use the Connecticut River for recreational kayaking and canoeing. I am also a frequent walker and cyclist in the area.

The Connecticut River divides the states of Vermont and New Hampshire and, in the Upper Valley, is spanned by relatively few bridges. These bridges are the only means for residents of one state to travel to the other state for work or pleasure. For those seeking recreation, communities on both sides of the river are blessed with an abundance of trails: some walking only, some multi-use. Along with the road network, these trails serve to link the communities.

With large populations on both sides of the Connecticut River, as well as significant business centers on both sides (notably, two major regional hospitals, a large university, and many shopping centers) the limited number of bridges see big spikes of traffic at certain periods of time during the day. Since these points are the only way to cross the river, walkers and cyclists have no option than to use them to travel between the states.

Reopening the Wilder Dam for use by pedestrians to cross the Connecticut River would provide immeasurably health and traffic-easement benefits for the region. Many Vermont commuters would choose to commute by bicycle or foot to their jobs in Hanover and Lebanon, NH. This would ease traffic on the bridges as well as provide a safer, more enjoyable option for workers. Beyond commuting, this linkage would allow trails on the Vermont side to be linked with those in New Hampshire, providing an expansive list of possibilities for recreation.

Like all regions, the Upper Valley competes for increasingly limited workers for its jobs. Quality of life is of prime importance to those considering a job move. Opening up Wilder Dam for human-powered travel would be a major quality-of-life improvement in the area.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Dwight Aspinwall

Document Content(s)

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