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The Connecticut River belongs to the citizens, held in trust (Public trust Doctrine) by the individual states, not to a corporate entity. As owners of the river our rights and needs come first. The river must be managed to provide both recreational opportunities to the people and to provide maximum protection and management of wildlife. Things that aren't happening now with the massive up/down changes in water elevation and extreme variations river flows.

Yes, we need the electricity produced by the dams, but it needs to be more on our terms, not based on corporate profits. Great River Hydro (GRH) needs to become the good neighbor.

Riverbank erosion, yes it has always happened and always will, but we don't need to exacerbate it. This license needs to contain provisions that minimize the impacts of the dam on the riverbanks. Keeping the river at a more consistent flow rate and a more constant elevation will minimize this.

Allowing the dam to operate at peak production should be the rare exception, rather than the rule. Changes in discharge rates must be of lesser intensity with more gradual buildup, and for shorter periods of time. Destroying habitat and wildlife for a short term generation gain is not an option.

Likewise impacting downstream boaters, swimmers, and people along the shoreline with a huge dump of water (think flood stage conditions) is not acceptable. This puts lives at risk.

As someone who kayaks this stretch of the river, outings are based on water release rates and times from the dam. There are certain times when it is truly not safe to be out there. This not acceptable. We have been forced to give up our rights to use the river in deference peak electricity production (think corporate profits). The flip side of this are the periods that the dam is refilling and water flows are reduced to the absolute minimum. Now there are sections where have to out of the kayaks and walk them across the shallows. Fishing in large sections of the river is not even an option. New license, new conditions.

And as GRH is profiting from using our river for free, it only stands to reason that there should be a "good neighbor" section in the new contract that spells out specific "civic duty" actions that need to undertaken on an ongoing basis by GRH. Being a 50 year contract, this section should be periodically reviewed (every 10 years?) to evaluate current requirements as well as to consider revisions, changes, and updates to required actions.

Certainly maintaining and enhancing public use areas (such as Kilowatt), boat ramps, or even adding additional public areas and uses are fair asks. This of course applies to both sides of the river.

If done properly, we all parties should benefit from the new license.

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