

Catherine Gellatly, North Springfield, VT.

To: The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC)

As a frequent user of the Connecticut River waters between Ascutney, Vermont, and Bellows Falls, Vermont, as well as other locations on the river, I would like to submit comment on the regulations of the river between:

* Wilder Dam, P-1892-030

* Bellows Falls Dam, P-1855-050

My primary concerns are:

* The environmental impact of the fluctuation in water level

* Public river access and the lack of small and non-motorized craft landings on the Vermont side of the river. I am especially interested in seeing a rowing facility established close to the Springfield, Vermont area.

* River access and use as an economic bolster

Water level: Drastic and daily fluctuations of the river level due to hydro facility draw down seems to be affecting wildlife populations and causing sedimentation changes. Less fluctuation would be worth implementing and studying. Research funding should be drawn from a percentage of the hydro profits. The Vermont Center for Ecostudies might be a good resource.

River access: As frequent users of the Hoyt's Landing Access, it is disappointing that there is no usage allowed other than for fishing and motorized craft. Proper river access and incentivized use would be an economic bolster for a region that could greatly benefit from it. Since the Town of Springfield and surrounding towns do not have access to the river at any other point, this severely limits their ability to enjoy the river. We have a beautiful river that is challenging for people to take advantage of unless actively fishing. The fishing community currently does help financially support the Hoyts landing through license fees, but the waterway should be open for everyone to enjoy which means it needs to be properly funded from additional sources. The river is a public waterway and natural resource that should be available for all to enjoy.

Development of recreation: A large number of non-motorized small craft use Hoyt's Landing, but because of the limitations of its use as designated by the State Dept. of Fish and Wildlife, better options should be made available in the Springfield area. Great River Hydro does an admirable job of managing the Herrick's Cove area. There is an interest in establishing a community rowing and boating facility in the area which could be used for small craft instruction, for development of school teams, for community access to the river, and for canoe camping along the river. Rowing is an incredible team sport that is accessible for any age and any ability - I have had the opportunity to row with rowers from age 12 to 85, as well as rowers who are physically impaired or would otherwise be challenged to participate in other team sports. Rowing creates incredible communities, strengthens social connections, builds strong physical bodies, and develops mental toughness. It is a sport that anyone can benefit from and has a low impact on natural waterways. Outreach by Great River Hydro for a public/private partnership to establish such a facility would greatly enhance the diversity of recreation in the area, create more possibilities for river stewardship, and build community relationships.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Catherine Gellatly

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