

Marina Garland, Perkinsville, VT.

Comment Re: FERC No. 1904, Vernon Dam, Great River Hydro LLC, FERC No. 1855, Bellows Falls Dam, Great River Hydro LLC, FERC No. 1892, Wilder Dam, Great River Hydro LLC

Dear Secretary Reese,

I am writing in regards to the relicensing of the three hydropower dams "Wilder, Bellows Falls, and Vernon" that affect the Connecticut River where I live and play in southern Vermont. I live in Weathersfield, VT which borders the river, and I have paddled a substantial part of the paddlers trail, giving me an up-close look into the way these dams affect the river, its ecology, shoreline homes and farms, and recreation.

I see that the new license as proposed will shift toward a more "run-of-the-river" model. While this is very exciting and a much-needed step in the right direction, the license appears otherwise bereft of mitigation measures we should expect from a company that will be profiting hugely from this public resource over a long period of time. I will be in my seventies before the public can comment again.

I would like to see funding for:

• Improvements to recreation infrastructure, including annual investments

• Restoration of riverbanks

• Protection of wildlife and river ecology, including improvements for fish passages

• Research/ data collection/ reporting

Recreational access to the Connecticut is extremely limited. I would like to see annual investments toward more public access, including boat launch and swimming, in more than just the towns that the dams operate in. While most of our towns don't host the actual dams, those dams are still affecting, not to mention profiting from, our shared river. For example, in Springfield, the only boat launch is funded solely by fishing licenses, and non-fishing residents are discouraged from using it. There is nowhere else close to access the river. Great River Hydro should provide funds to individual towns at regular intervals along the river, where it makes the most sense in terms of population, to purchase property for river access, and continuing funds to subsequently develop and maintain that access for residents throughout the license term. Don't forget ADA accessible facilities.

The Paddler's Trail has wonderful potential. However, it is short on campsites and the campsites are short on appropriate latrines. On weekends, it is extremely hard for long-distance paddlers to find a campsite, as they're all already full of weekend campers. Many of the portage trails need help. A fund for maintaining and improving the Paddler's Trail is a no-brainer way to expand access to the river.

Erosion is obviously a large and ongoing problem for any town that borders a river. While hydropower generation is not the only factor in causing erosion, it is clearly one of the largest, so there should be funds for managing erosion and, where appropriate, restoring riverbanks.

Fish passages: Make it happen, make it soon, do it right! Fish passage is essential!

The new license must stipulate funding for ongoing, independent research into the hydro operations' affects on bank erosion, sediment deposition, water quality, and river ecology. It is insufficient to hope that going run-of-the-river will be good enough on its own, without continuous and thorough data collection. Another forty years is too long to just hope for the best.

Respectfully submitted, Marina Garland, Weathersfield, VT

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