

FEDERAL ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, DC 20426
December 13, 2013

OFFICE OF ENERGY PROJECTS

Project No. 1892-026 – New Hampshire / Vermont
Project No. 1855-045 – New Hampshire / Vermont
Project No. 1904-073 – New Hampshire / Vermont
TransCanada Hydro Northeast Inc.

Mr. John Ragonese
Relicensing Project Manager
TransCanada Hydro Northeast Inc.
4 Park Street, Suite 402
Concord NH 03301

Reference: Interim ILP schedule for Study Plan Determination

Dear Mr. Ragonese:

On September 13, 2013, the Director, Office of Energy Projects, issued the study plan determination for the relicensing of TransCanada Hydro Northeast Inc.'s (TransCanada) Wilder (P-1892), Bellows Falls (1855), and Vernon (P-1904) hydroelectric projects. However, due to Entergy's August 27, 2013 announcement of its plan to decommission the Vermont Yankee Nuclear Power Plant (Vermont Yankee) by the end of 2014, the study plan determination did not address 20 aquatic resource studies because implementation of these studies may produce unusable data if conducted while Vermont Yankee is still operating.¹

As a result, on November 26, 2013, we held a technical meeting to obtain more information on the proposed Vermont Yankee decommissioning and listen to comments from FirstLight and stakeholders regarding any necessary adjustments to the proposed and requested study designs and/or schedules. At this meeting we worked with TransCanada and stakeholders to identify: (1) studies not affected by operations of Vermont Yankee, that may be implemented in 2014; (2) studies' likely affected by operations of Vermont Yankee; and (3) studies that may need modification to their methodology due to the decommissioning of Vermont Yankee.

Generally, the majority of the stakeholder comments centered on the studies' implementation schedules. In consideration of these comments, we will establish

¹ Appendix A includes a list of the 19 deferred studies, an additional study (study 3.1.2), and summarizes the stakeholder recommended modifications.

appropriate, study-specific implementation schedules in the pending study plan determination. That study plan determination will be issued by February 17, 2014.

In addition, stakeholders identified three studies where minor modifications to study methodology may be necessary (Study 6: *Water Quality Monitoring and Continuous Temperature Monitoring*, Study 13: *Tributary and Backwater Area Fish Access and Habitats Study*, and Study 21: *American Shad Telemetry Study – Vernon*) TransCanada committed to consult with stakeholders and file an amended study plan for each of the three studies in December, 2013. As such, TransCanada should file the amended study plans by December 31, 2013. Each of the amended study plans should include proof of consultation with stakeholders. In the event TransCanada does not adopt a stakeholder recommendation, the amended study plan should also include TransCanada's reasons based on project-specific information.

Finally, during the technical meeting TransCanada agreed to confer with FirstLight Hydro Generating Company (FirstLight)² on the need for a new due date for the filing of the Initial Study Report in 2014. FirstLight and TransCanada notified Commission staff on December 10, 2013 that the existing deadline, September 13, 2014, is appropriate.

If you have any questions regarding this letter please contact Ken Hogan at 202-502-8434, or via email at kenneth.hogan@ferc.gov.

Sincerely,

Timothy J. Welch, Chief
West Branch
Division of Hydropower Licensing

Enclosure: Appendix A – List of studies identified as potentially affected by the decommissioning of Vermont Yankee and discussed during the November 26, 2013 technical meeting.

cc: Mailing List
Public Files

² Licensee for the downstream Turners Falls Project (P-1889) and the Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Project (P-2485).

APPENDIX A

LIST OF STUDIES IDENTIFIED AS POTENTIALLY AFFECTED BY THE DECOMMISSIONING OF VERMONT YANKEE AND DISCUSSED DURING THE NOVEMBER 26, 2013 TECHNICAL MEETING

Study	Summary of Stakeholder Recommendations
6 -- Water Quality Monitoring and Continuous Temperature Monitoring	Initiate study in 2015. Some minor modifications to study methodology may be necessary. TransCanada and Stakeholders committed to filing an amended study plan by December 25, 2013.
7 -- Aquatic Habitat Mapping	No Change
8 -- Channel Morphology and Benthic Habitat Study	No Change
9 -- Instream Flow Study	No Change
10 -- Fish Assemblage Study	Initiate study in 2015
11 -- American Eel Survey	Initiate study in 2015
12 -- Tessellated Darter Survey	Initiate study in 2015
13 -- Tributary and Backwater Area Fish Access and Habitats Study	Some minor modifications to study methodology may be necessary. TransCanada and Stakeholders committed to filing an amended study plan by December 25, 2013.
14 -- Resident Fish Spawning in Impoundments Study	Initiate study in 2015
15 -- Resident Fish Spawning in Riverine Sections Study	Initiate study in 2015
16 -- Sea Lamprey Spawning Assessment	Initiate study in 2015
17 -- Upstream Passage of Riverine Fish Species Assessment	Initiate study in 2015
18 -- American Eel Upstream Passage Assessment	Initiate study in 2015
19 -- American Eel Downstream Passage Assessment	Initiate study in 2015
20 -- American Eel Downstream Migration Timing Assessment	Initiate study in 2015
21 -- American Shad Telemetry Study – Vernon	Initiate study in 2015. Some minor modifications to study methodology may be necessary. TransCanada and Stakeholders committed to filing an amended study plan

Study	Summary of Stakeholder Recommendations
	by December 25, 2013.
22 -- Downstream Migration of Juvenile American Shad - Vernon	Initiate study in 2015
23 -- Fish Impingement, Entrainment, and Survival Study	Initiate study in 2015
24 - Dwarf Wedgemussel (<i>Alasmidonta heterodon</i>) and Co-Occurring Mussel Study	No Change
25 -- Dragonfly and Damselfly Inventory and Assessment	Initiate study in 2015
New -- Vernon Hydroacoustic Study	This is a requested study modification for multiple studies, and is not proposed by TransCanada. If this study modification is approved in the study plan determination, requesters suggest it be initiated in 2015.