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April 15, 2013

**VIA ELECTRONIC FILING**

Kimberly D. Bose, Secretary  
Federal Energy Regulatory Commission  
888 First Street, N.E.  
Washington, DC 20426

**Re: TransCanada Hydro Northeast Inc.'s Proposed Study Plan, Response to Commission Staff's Additional Information Requests, Correction of PAD Deficiencies and Study Reports**

**Project Nos. 1892-026, 1855-045, and 1904-073**

Dear Secretary Bose:

TransCanada Hydro Northeast Inc. ("TransCanada") is the owner and licensee of the Wilder Hydroelectric Project (FERC No. 1892) (the "Wilder Project"), the Bellows Falls Hydroelectric Project (FERC No. 1855) (the "Bellows Falls Project"), and the Vernon Hydroelectric Project (FERC No. 1904) (the "Vernon Project"). The current licenses for these projects each expire on April 30, 2018. On October 31, 2012, TransCanada filed with the Commission its Notice of Intent ("NOI") to seek new licenses for each project, along with a separate Pre-Application Document ("PAD") for each project.

FirstLight Hydro Generating Company ("FirstLight") is the licensee of the Turners Falls Hydroelectric Project (FERC No. 1889) (the "Turners Falls Project") and the Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Project (FERC No. 2485) (the "Northfield Mountain Project").<sup>1</sup> The current licenses for both the Turners Falls Project and the Northfield Mountain Project expire on

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<sup>1</sup> The Wilder Project, the Bellows Falls Project, the Vernon Project, the Turners Falls Project and the Northfield Mountain Project are collectively referred to herein as the "Connecticut River Projects."

April 30, 2018. On October 31, 2012, FirstLight filed with the Commission its NOI to seek new licenses for the Turners Fall Project and the Northfield Mountain Project, along with a single PAD for both projects.

On December 21, 2012, Commission Staff issued its Scoping Document for its National Environmental Policy Act analysis of the Connecticut River Projects (“SD1”). Commission Staff indicated in SD1 their intent to prepare a single environmental impact statement for the Connecticut River Projects. In January 2013 in various locations near the projects in New Hampshire, Vermont and Massachusetts, Commission Staff held six project specific scoping meetings and one additional scoping meeting to help identify the cumulative effects of licensing the Connecticut River Projects.

Subsequently, state and federal agencies, local officials, non-governmental organizations, and other interested parties (collectively referred to as stakeholders) filed with the Commission letters and documents containing comments on the PADs and identifying resources potentially affected by hydro project operations. Together with many of these comments, stakeholders requested that specific studies be performed to examine and determine project effects for the environmental impact analysis that will be needed to issue new licenses for the projects.

In addition, by letter dated March 1, 2013, Commission Staff identified deficiencies in the PADs that needed to be corrected, requested certain items of additional information, and provided their own study requests with respect to TransCanada’s projects based upon review of the PADs and public testimony from scoping meetings. Under the Integrated Licensing Process (ILP), study requests are required to address the seven criteria listed in 18 CFR § 5.9(b).

Pursuant to 18 C.F.R. § 5.11, TransCanada hereby submits the following materials and information, which are included with this filing:

1. Responses to Commission Staff’s Identification of PAD Deficiencies, Requests for Additional Information and Status of Study Reports Referenced in the PADs
2. Study Request Responsiveness Summary
3. Proposed Study Plan, containing 33 individual study plans
4. Schedule for ILP Study Plan Consultation Meetings with stakeholders and Commission staff

#### **1. RESPONSES TO COMMISSION STAFF’S IDENTIFICATION OF PAD DEFICIENCIES, REQUEST FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION, AND STATUS OF STUDY REPORTS REFERENCED IN THE PADs**

As noted above, Commission’s Staff March 1, 2013 letter requested (i) corrections to deficiencies in the PADs, (ii) additional information for TransCanada’s projects, (iii) study reports that TransCanada referenced in its PAD that were not yet available when the PADs were filed with the Commission on October 31, 2012, and (iv) additional comments for Preliminary Licensing Proposal (PLP) and License Application. TransCanada has addressed each of these

requests and files responses in the document titled Responses to Commission Staff's Identification of PAD Deficiencies, Requests for Additional Information and Status of Study Reports included with this filing. Responses to Commission Staff's study requests are addressed along with stakeholder study requests in TransCanada's Proposed Study Plan.

## **2. STUDY REQUEST RESPONSIVENESS SUMMARY**

TransCanada includes with this filing a document titled Study Request Responsiveness Summary. This document identifies each study request by requestor, indicates which of TransCanada's study plans is responsive to the request, and the rationale for why a particular study request was not addressed through a study plan.

## **3. PROPOSED STUDY PLAN**

TransCanada is proposing studies and data collection efforts in its Proposed Study Plan to address the effects of continued operation of TransCanada's projects. TransCanada's Proposed Study Plan has thirty-three individual studies and data collection efforts. Each of these is described in detail in the document included with this filing titled TransCanada's Proposed Study Plan for the Wilder, Bellows Falls and Vernon Projects.

## **4. SCHEDULE FOR STUDY PLAN MEETINGS**

In accordance with 18 C.F.R. § 5.11, TransCanada will hold a study plan meeting open to stakeholders, specifically the study requestors and the public, within 30 days of this filing. TransCanada recognizes that a single meeting will not be adequate to clarify and discuss its Proposed Study Plan. Therefore the purpose of the first meeting will be a general overview of the entire suite of studies, identification of stakeholder interest communities or working groups, and immediate data collection initiatives. Subsequent meetings will discuss study plans based upon common issues with interested stakeholder working groups. The initial study meeting and subsequent meetings are listed below including the resource topic and study plans to be discussed.

Stakeholders interested in participating in working groups are encouraged to attend Study Plan Meeting #1 and the subsequent in-person meetings scheduled for the study plan subjects identified below. Attendance is encouraged at these initial meetings. With the exception of Study Plan Meeting # 1, there should be an opportunity to attend via telephone conference. Subsequent meetings on the subject study plans will be scheduled accordingly and either by teleconference or in person. Interested parties are encouraged to contact John Ragonese, TransCanada's Relicensing Project Manager at [john\\_ragonese@transcanada.com](mailto:john_ragonese@transcanada.com) if the wish to be notified of teleconference call-in information prior to the meetings.

For the purpose of associating Study Plan Meeting subjects with Study Numbers, please refer to the following:

Erosion	Study Nos. 1-3
Water Resources and Modeling	Study Nos. 4-6
Aquatics	Study Nos. 7-25
Terrestrial	Study Nos. 26-29
Recreation	Study Nos. 30-31
Aesthetics	Study No. 32
Cultural and Historic Resources	Study No. 33

**Study Plan Meeting #1 – Overview of Proposed Study Plan, Identification of Interested Stakeholder Working Groups and Immediate Data Collection Initiatives**

Date & Time: Monday, May 13, 2013 at 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Location: Kilton Public Library Conference Room  
80 Main Street  
West Lebanon, NH 03784  
603-298-8544

**Study Plan Meeting #2 – Water Resources and Modeling (morning); Erosion (afternoon)**

Date & Time: Thursday, May 16, 2013 at 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Location: Vermont Room at the Fairfield Inn  
104 Ballardvale Drive,  
White River Junction, VT 05001  
1-802-291-9911

**Study Plan Meeting #3 - Aquatics**

Date & Time: Monday, May 20, 2013 at 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Location: Vermont Room at the Fairfield Inn  
104 Ballardvale Drive,  
White River Junction, VT 05001  
1-802-291-9911

**Study Plan Meeting #4 - Aquatics**

Date & Time: Monday, May 23, 2013 at 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Location: Vermont Room at the Fairfield Inn  
104 Ballardvale Drive,  
White River Junction, VT 05001  
1-802-291-9911

**Study Plan Meeting #5 – Terrestrial (morning); Aquatics (afternoon)**

Date & Time: Thursday, June 6, 2013 at 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.  
Morning meeting at 9:00 a.m.  
Afternoon meeting at 1:00 p.m.

Location: Vermont Room at the Fairfield Inn  
104 Ballardvale Drive,  
White River Junction, VT 05001  
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**Study Plan Meeting #6 – Recreation (morning), Aesthetics, and Cultural and Historic Resources (afternoon)**

Date & Time: Friday, June 7, 2013 at 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.  
Morning meeting at 9:00 a.m.  
Afternoon meeting at 1:00 p.m.

Location: Vermont Room at the Fairfield Inn  
104 Ballardvale Drive,  
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Pursuant to 18 C.F.R. § 5.12, comments on the Proposed Study Plan are due within 90 days of this filing. Accordingly, the deadline for submitting comments on TransCanada's Proposed Study Plan is July 15, 2013.

If there are any questions regarding the information provided in this filing or the process, please contact me at 603-498-2851 or by emailing [john\\_ragonese@transcanada.com](mailto:john_ragonese@transcanada.com).

Sincerely,



John L. Ragonese  
FERC License Manager

Attachments: Distribution List  
Responses to Commission Staff's Identification of PAD Deficiencies, Requests  
for Additional Information and Status of Study Reports  
Proposed Study Plan for the Wilder, Bellows Falls and Vernon Projects  
Study Request Responsiveness Summary

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