

ORIGINAL

The River Residents Association

Dedicated to preserving a life worth living on a river worth loving
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SECRETARY OF THE
COMMISSION
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25 February 2013

Kimberly D. Bose, Secretary
Federal Energy Regulatory Commission
888 First Street, NE
Washington, D.C. 20426

RE: Connecticut River concerns -

- EXTREME WATER LEVEL FLUCTUATIONS
- CAMPSITE LICENSE TERMS

Turners Falls Project No. 1889-081
Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Project No. 2485-063

Dear Commission,

Michael and Diane Kane
Camp 10E – West Camp Road
Montague, MA 01351

I am a member of The River Residents Association. The Association is comprised of people who own camps, cottages, and homes along the river. There are 24 “licensed” sites on project lands, and, there are also private land owners, and members of private clubs that recreate on the Connecticut River within the Turners Falls/Northfield MA section of the river.

We are concerned for the future of this beautiful natural resource, as well as our existence along the rivers banks. We take exception to it being called the “lower reservoir” of the Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage project.

As many of us live on the river, we see things changing, sometimes on a daily basis.

Our major concern is the negative effects we see occurring from extreme erratic water level fluctuations.

The following are observations by people who live and recreate along the river. Many of us have spent decades here.

Page 2 of 4 – River Residents Association

Observations included but not limited to -

- **erosion along the shores**
- **loss of recreation areas that allowed boat access, now have no shoreline, only steep banks to climb**
- **lack of adequate tenting facilities**
- **silt and sediment buildup**
- **sand bars that come and go**
- **algae growth in Barton Cove**
- **damage to personal property at “low tides” – torque damage to docks, boats stranded rocks/stuck in mud**
- **wetland/cattail/marsh habitat changing/vanishing**
- **land mass loss to islands**
- **sand bank habitat and swallows gone**
- **beaches appear and disappear within hours**
- **backwaters/shallows/coves depths diminishing**
- **less heron, osprey and kingfisher sightings**
- **less dragonflies seen**
- **changes in fishing bounty**
- **Fish egg nests exposed at “low tides” drying out and dying**
- **Waterfowl breeding grounds unexpectedly become submerged and eggs rot or offspring drown**

We believe everyone here wants to work together to ask the right questions and find effective solutions. We feel we, the river residents, are an integral part of this process.

Is there a way to create moderation, or eliminate altogether, dramatic water level fluctuations? Can it be, should it be, regulated differently? For the record, the Association strongly favors research into a “closed loop” system. It would be a true man-made reservoir that would no longer involve the river for the generation of electricity.

We have prepared a visual exhibit. We hope it will enlighten, and underscore some of the concerning observations we have stated.

Our other concern is about our continued existence as residents along the river. Most of us in this association are “Camp” owners with a “License” agreement allowing us to occupy the land.

Our existing structures are a historical use that began back in the early 1920’s and the previous licensees for these projects issued permits to manage their use. However, prior to 2008, the previous licensors did not seek Commission approval of these uses and occupancies of project property. Someone dropped the ball along the way. We owe great thanks to Mr. John Howard of the Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage facility for noticing this oversight. He realized there was no mention of the existing residential and private structures and took action to correct this. An application was filed in October

Page 4 of 4 – River Residents Association

and responsibilities? How can we alter the current arrangement to meet our present and future needs?

We respectfully ask for consideration in lengthening the license term commensurate to the number of years approved for FirstLight Hydro Generation Company's new license to operate beginning in 2018. What is the procedure to effectuate this?

We endeavor to continue to assist and promote an ongoing cooperative relationship with all parties interest in mind. We are dedicated to a life worth living on a river worth loving. We thank you for your time and respectfully submit this inquiry and photographs to the Commission.

Sincerely,

Michael and Diane Kane *mk* *DK*

**The River Residents Association
Montague ~ Gill ~ Northfield
Massachusetts**

Document Content(s)

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