

FEDERAL ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION

Washington, DC 20426

May 5, 2016

OFFICE OF ENERGY PROJECTS

Project No. 1889-085 – Massachusetts

Project No. 2485-071 – Massachusetts

FirstLight Hydro Generating Company

Subject: Revised Process Plan and Schedule – Turners Falls and Northfield Mountain Projects

To All Interested Parties:

On April 15, 2013, Commission staff issued a process plan and schedule under the Integrated Licensing Process for TransCanada Hydro Northeast Inc.'s (TransCanada) Wilder Hydroelectric Project No. 1892, Bellows Falls Hydroelectric Project No. 1855, and Vernon Hydroelectric Project No. 1904, and FirstLight Hydro Generating Company's (FirstLight) Turners Falls Hydroelectric Project No. 1889 and Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Project No. 2485.¹ The process plan and schedule set pre-filing milestones and deadlines for, among other things, filing study reports, requesting modifications to approved study plans, filing preliminary licensing proposals (or draft license applications), and filing final license applications.

After Commission staff issued the process plan and schedule, the operator (Entergy) of the Vermont Yankee Nuclear Power Plant (Vermont Yankee) announced plans to decommission the nuclear facility during the fourth quarter of 2014.² On February 21, 2014, study plan determinations for TransCanada and FirstLight's projects were issued, which amended the schedule for a number of aquatic studies that would likely be affected by decommissioning Vermont Yankee. Specifically, the time to conduct these aquatic studies was delayed by one year (i.e., until the 2015 field season) and March 1, 2016, was established as the due date for the final study reports for these studies.³

¹ Commission staff modified the process plan and schedule on August 14, 2013.

² Operation of Vermont Yankee affected Connecticut River water temperatures within the Vernon Hydroelectric Project reservoir and downstream through the Turners Falls Hydroelectric Project.

³ The study plan determination for FirstLight's projects established March 1, 2017, as the due date for studies 3.3.5 and 3.3.19.

To address the effect of the delayed aquatic studies on pre-filing milestones and deadlines, Commission staff issued a revised process plan and schedule on September 14, 2015. The revised process plan and schedule required TransCanada and FirstLight to file final study reports for the delayed aquatic studies, and any other outstanding studies, on March 1, 2016, or indicate in their filings when any outstanding study reports will be completed and filed with the Commission.

On March 1, 2016, FirstLight filed a study report for 13 finalized studies,⁴ addendums to two studies,⁵ and a schedule indicating when the study reports for the 14 ongoing studies⁶ will be filed with the Commission. To establish the schedule for resource agencies and other stakeholders to request modifications to the approved study plan for final study reports filed after March 1, 2016, we are issuing a revised process plan and schedule for FirstLight's projects (see attached). Any studies not completed and filed with the Commission by the October 14, 2016, due date established in the revised process plan and schedule, should be completed and filed with the study report due March 1, 2017. As appropriate, the process plan and schedule may be revised in the future.

A revised process plan and schedule for TransCanada's projects are being issued concurrently with this letter.

⁴ The finalized studies include studies 3.2.1, 3.3.4, 3.3.6, 3.3.8, 3.3.9, 3.3.10, 3.3.11, 3.3.12, 3.3.20, 3.4.1, 3.5.1, 3.6.1, and 3.6.5.

⁵ Addendums were filed for studies 3.2.2 and 3.3.18.

⁶ Ongoing studies include studies 3.1.2, 3.1.3, 3.3.1, 3.3.2, 3.3.3, 3.3.5, 3.3.7, 3.3.13, 3.3.15, 3.3.16, 3.3.19, 3.6.6, 3.7.1, and 3.8.1.

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If you have any questions, please contact Brandon Cherry at (202) 502-8328 or brandon.cherry@ferc.gov.

Sincerely,

Vince Yearick
Director
Division of Hydropower Licensing

Attachment: Revised Process Plan and Schedule
cc: Mailing List, Public Files

REVISED PROCESS PLAN AND SCHEDULE

The process plan and schedule include a list of milestones, but do not include all post-filing milestones that will be needed to process the final license application. Shaded milestones are unnecessary if there are no study disputes. If the due date falls on a weekend or holiday, the due date is the following business day. Early filings or issuances will not result in changes to these deadlines. For continuity, the process plan and schedule include milestones and dates for the ongoing study report review that was established in our September 14, 2015, letter and began on March 1, 2016.

Responsible Party	Milestone	Date	FERC Regulation
FirstLight	Filed Final Study Report for Studies 3.2.1, 3.3.4, 3.3.6, 3.3.8, 3.3.9, 3.3.10, 3.3.11, 3.3.12, 3.3.20, 3.4.1, 3.5.1, 3.6.1, and 3.6.5 ¹	3/1/16	5.15(c) 5.15(f)
All Stakeholders	Study Report Meeting – <i>3/1/16 Study Report</i>	3/16/16	5.15(c)(2)
FirstLight	Filed Study Report Meeting Summary – <i>3/1/16 Study Report</i>	3/31/16	5.15(c)(3)
FirstLight	Filed Final License Application ²	4/30/16	5.17(a)
All Stakeholders	Filed Disagreements/Requests to Amend Study Plan – <i>3/1/16 Study Report</i>	4/30/16	5.15(c)(4)
All Stakeholders	File Responses to Disagreements/Amendment Requests – <i>3/1/16 Study Report</i>	5/30/16	5.15(c)(5)
FERC	Issue Director's Determination on Disagreements/Amendments – <i>3/1/16 Study Report</i>	6/29/16	5.15(c)(6)
FirstLight	File Final Study Report for Studies 3.1.2, 3.1.3, 3.3.1, 3.3.2, 3.3.3, 3.3.7, 3.3.13, 3.3.15, 3.3.16, and 3.6.6 ³	10/14/16	5.15(c) 5.15(f)
All Stakeholders	Study Report Meeting – <i>10/14/16 Study Report</i>	10/29/16	5.15(c)(2)
FirstLight	File Study Report Meeting Summary – <i>10/14/16 Study Report</i>	11/13/16	5.15(c)(3)

Responsible Party	Milestone	Date	FERC Regulation
All Stakeholders	File Disagreements/Requests to Amend Study Plan – <i>10/14/16 Study Report</i>	12/13/16	5.15(c)(4)
All Stakeholders	File Responses to Disagreements/Amendment Requests – <i>10/14/16 Study Report</i>	1/12/17	5.15(c)(5)
FERC	Issue Director's Determination on Disagreements/Amendments – <i>10/14/16 Study Report</i>	2/11/17	5.15(c)(6)
FirstLight	File Final Study Report for Studies 3.3.5, 3.3.19, 3.7.1, and 3.8.1	3/1/17	5.15(c) 5.15(f)
All Stakeholders	Study Report Meeting – <i>3/1/17 Study Report</i>	3/16/17	5.15(c)(2)
FirstLight	File Study Report Meeting Summary – <i>3/1/17 Study Report</i>	3/31/17	5.15(c)(3)
All Stakeholders	File Disagreements/Requests to Amend Study Plan – <i>3/1/17 Study Report</i>	4/30/17	5.15(c)(4)
All Stakeholders	File Responses to Disagreements/Amendment Requests – <i>3/1/17 Study Report</i>	5/30/17	5.15(c)(5)
FERC	Issue Director's Determination on Disagreements/Amendments – <i>3/1/17 Study Report</i>	6/29/17	5.15(c)(6)
FirstLight	File Amended Final License Application	TBD	5.18

¹ Addendums to studies 3.2.2 and 3.3.18 were also filed on March 1, 2016.

² FirstLight filed the final license application on April 29, 2016. In the final license application, FirstLight proposes to combine the Turners Falls Hydroelectric Project and Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Project into a single Northfield Project for the purposes of relicensing.

³ FirstLight has indicated that it will file an addendum to study 3.1.2 by December 1, 2016.