APPENDIX B
UNITED STATES FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE COMMENT LETTER REGARDING THREATENED AND ENDANGERED SPECIES
March 16, 2010

Paul S. Ducheney  
City of Holyoke Gas & Electric Department  
99 Suffolk Street  
Holyoke, MA 01040-5082

Dear Mr. Ducheney:

This responds to your letter dated February 16, 2010, requesting that we review 14 hydroelectric projects proposed for certification under the Low Impact Hydropower Institute for information on the presence of federally-listed endangered or threatened species. The projects are located in Holyoke, Massachusetts on the Connecticut River, and within the canal system that traverses Holyoke. Our comments are provided in accordance with the Endangered Species Act (87 Stat. 884, as amended; 15 U.S.C. 1531, et seq.).

As stated in your letter, the federally-listed threatened Puritan tiger beetle is located within the area affected by hydroelectric facilities owned and operated by the Holyoke Gas and Electric Department (HGE). HGE has consulted with our office in the past to determine the potential effects from the operation of the dam at Holyoke on Puritan tiger beetles located at Rainbow Beach, Northampton, Massachusetts. As a result of informal consultation, HGE adjusted flows to minimize water level fluctuations at Rainbow Beach, and has partnered with this office and the Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge on research and outreach activities to promote the recovery of the species. Based on the information provided in your letter, we understand that there will be no changes to the operation of the hydroelectric projects. Therefore, we anticipate that the proposed certification is not likely to adversely affect Puritan tiger beetles.

No other federally-listed or proposed threatened or endangered species under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service are known to occur in the vicinity of the project area. The yellow lamp mussel referenced in your letter as a rare, threatened or endangered species (RTE) is a state-listed species; we recommend that you contact the Massachusetts Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program for their review for potential impacts. The National Marine Fisheries Service has jurisdiction over the shortnose sturgeon.
Preparation of a Biological Assessment or further consultation with us under section 7 of the Endangered Species Act is not necessary at this time. Should project plans change or additional information on listed or proposed species becomes available, this determination may be reconsidered.

Thank you for your cooperation. Please contact Ms. Susi von Oettingen of my staff at 603-223-2541, extension 22, if we can be of further assistance.

Sincerely yours,

Thomas R. Chapman
Supervisor
New England Field Office