



## United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE  
New England Field Office  
70 Commercial Street, Suite 300  
Concord, New Hampshire 03301-5087



September 26, 2005

Thomas A. Tarpey  
A&D Hydro, Inc.  
55 Union Street, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Boston, Massachusetts 02108-2400

Dear Mr. Tarpey:

This responds to your August 18, 2005 request for information on the presence of federally-listed or proposed, endangered or threatened species in relation to the West Springfield Hydroelectric Project, located on the Westfield River in West Springfield, Massachusetts.

Except for wintering bald eagles (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*), no federally-listed or proposed, threatened or endangered species or critical habitat under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service are known to occur in the project area. Preparation of a Biological Assessment or further consultation with us under Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act is not required.

While no impacts to currently federally-listed species are expected to occur at the above-referenced location, the American eel (*Anguilla rostrata*) is expected to occur at this location. The American eel is a species for which the Service is currently in receipt of a petition requesting that we list it as a threatened or endangered species. We published our initial finding relative to the petition on July 6, 2005 (enclosed). This preliminary finding announces that the petitioned action may be warranted and that a full status review is underway.

American eels can be found in many streams throughout eastern North America. Eels spawn in the ocean and larval eels subsequently migrate to coastal areas and eventually into freshwater streams and lakes where they grow to maturity. After several years, full grown eels mature and begin to migrate back to the ocean where they spawn. After spawning, American eels are believed to die. As a result of this life history strategy, adult American eels are known to be killed by hydroelectric facilities as they migrate back to the ocean. Dams are also known to be a significant barrier to the upstream passage of juvenile eels (elvers). As such, we encourage the consideration of American eels during future environmental planning at this project, and avoidance of impacts whenever possible.

This concludes our review of listed species and critical habitat in the project location and environs referenced above. No further Endangered Species Act coordination of this type is necessary for a period of one year from the date of this letter, unless additional information on listed, proposed, or potential candidate species like the American eel becomes available.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide these comments. Please contact Anthony Tur or me at 603-223-2541 if we can be of further assistance. **In the future, in order to expedite your reply, please direct any inquiries of this nature to this office at the above address.**

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael J. Amaral". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Michael J. Amaral  
Endangered Species Specialist  
New England Field Office

Enclosure