

DISTRIBUTED ELECTRONICALLY

December 18, 2018

Evan Riordan, Manager
Barton Village, Inc.
17 Village Square
P.O. Box 519
Barton, VT 05822

RE: Barton Village Project (FERC No. 7725)
Comments on Application for LIHI Certification

Dear Mr. Riordan,

The Department of Environmental Conservation (the Department) has reviewed recent improvements made at the project and writes to summarize progress to bring the project into compliance with the water quality certification and with criteria established by the Low-Impact Hydropower Institute (LIHI).

Background

The Barton Village Hydroelectric project (FERC Project No. 7725) received a water quality certification from the Department in May 2003. In February 2009, the Department received a notice from LIHI inquiring about the compliance of the Barton Village project with the conditions of its water quality certification pertaining to its application to be certified as low impact. The Department's review of project compliance with its water quality certification identified several outstanding issues. At the time, Barton Village had not fully implemented the equipment to automate operations or a monitoring and data capturing systems needed to operate the project in true run-of-river. Additionally, Barton had not installed the downstream fish passage facility as required by the certification. After years of little to no progress addressing these issues, the Department reached out to the Village Board of Trustees after a change in management in November 2014. Subsequently, the Department met with the Trustees to discuss compliance issues. At that time the Trustees committed to working with the Department to bring the project into compliance. This cooperation led to the completion of infrastructure projects, repairs, and installation of automation and monitoring equipment needed to bring the project into compliance. This letter serves to summarize the progress made since that date.

Flows and Fish Passage

Condition B of the Water Quality Certification requires the project to operate in true run-of-river mode with outflow equal to inflow on an instantaneous basis. Additionally, a flow of 45 cfs or inflow, if less, shall be released into the bypass reach as described in the flow management plan (Condition D). The level of the impoundment, Pensioner Pond, needs to be maintained at or above the flashboards unless written authorization is received. Condition D requires the development of a flow management plan detailing how the project will operate in compliance with Condition B and the installation of a downstream fish passage facility at the project. Barton installed the fish passage facility in 2015 and modifications to ensure safe, timely and effective downstream fish passage have been completed. Additionally, through consultation with the Department it was determined that repairs were needed to a low-level sluice gate at the dam in order to maintain the water level of Pensioner Pond during low flow periods. Barton Village

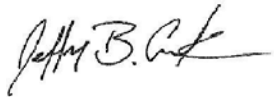
completed repair work on the low-level sluice gate at the project in fall 2018. These investments will allow the project to operate in full compliance with the certification.

Automation and Monitoring

Condition E of the certification requires the development of a flow monitoring plan to continuously monitor and maintain operation records at the project (i.e. bypass flow release, turbine discharge, impoundment levels). Barton Village has worked continuously over the years to install and upgrade the automation and monitoring systems at the project to a point where it is in compliance with the certification. The completed installation of monitoring equipment will allow Barton Village to provide the Department with operations records upon request.

The improvements to Barton Village project were needed to bring the project into compliance were capital intensive and required modifications to the existing infrastructure. Due to these improvements, the project now has the infrastructure in place to operate in full compliance going forward. The Department recognizes that the new equipment may require adjustments in the future as the Village gains an understanding of how it responds to different flow events, and the Department is confident in Barton's commitment to ensure compliance with run-of-river conditions. As discussed, the Department would like to continue to work cooperatively with Barton to ensure instantaneous run-of-river operations are maintained. Therefore, the Department requests that documentation of operations for one water year (October 1 – September 30) be submitted to the Department and that consultation with the Department be included as a condition of the LIHI certification. In addition to helping ensure compliance with its water quality certification, these modifications will enable operations consistent with applicable LIHI criteria. We appreciate Barton Village's cooperation to bring the project into compliance. Further comments on the application may be provided when the Department is contacted by the LIHI reviewer.

Very truly yours,



Jeff Crocker
Supervising River Ecologist

c: Eric Davis, VDEC
Pete McHugh, VFWD
Pete Emerson, VFWD