

Cc: Thomas, Eric; Gephard, Steve; Murphy, Brian; 'melissa_grader@fws.gov';
'indigoharbor@yahoo.com'; Hannon, Robert
Subject: LIHI Certification For the Mechanicsville Hydroelectric Project, FERC
Project No. 9611-001
Importance: Low

Mr. Cueto,

Please see attached letter of support for the
LIHI certification for the Mechanicsville
Hydroelectric Project.

If you have any further questions, please let
me know.

Sincerely,

Brian Golembiewski, EA3
CT DEEP
860.424.3867

July 11, 2011

Jeff Cueto
Low Impact Hydropower Institute
34 Providence Street
Portland, Maine 04103

RE: Application For Low Impact Hydropower Certification
Mechanicsville Hydroelectric Project, FERC Project No. 9611-001

Dear Mr. Cueto:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the above referenced application for Low Impact Hydropower Certification. The appropriate programs within the Department have reviewed the application materials located on your website and other related natural resource information. Based on this review, the Department finds that the application demonstrates consistency with the eight certification criteria:

1. River Flows - The hydroelectric development is always operated in a run-of-river mode, provides the minimum prescribed flow of 22 cfs through the dam and generates with the minimum start-up flow rate of 86 CFS, all in compliance with DEP's Recommendations for Terms and Conditions and FERC's Exemption. The applicant has also agreed to suppress leakage around the low level outlets (at least 3 or 4) to divert flow to the spillway where it can be more easily quantified and monitored;

2. Water Quality - The project is unlikely to contribute to the impairment of designated use(s) in the lower French River and receiving segment of the Quinebaug River. The flashboards at the project dam are lowered by 1 foot on or before July 1st and are replaced after October 1st to improve dissolved oxygen and lower temperatures in the impoundment and French River, all in compliance with DEP's Recommendations for Terms and Conditions and FERC's Exemption;

3. Fish Passage and Protection - The Department nor the US Fish and Wildlife Service have plans for anadromous fish restoration in the French River at this time. So, fish passage requirements are recommended solely for American eel. The applicant states that eels currently occur both upstream and downstream of the project dam, but will enhance eel passage as recommended by the Department. The applicant will install an eel pass for upstream passage and cease generation on rainy nights between September 1 to November 15 to aid downstream eel passage;

4. Watershed Protection - The operation of the hydroelectric project has had no adverse affects on the watershed of the French and Quinebaug Rivers. In accordance with the FERC Exemption, the applicant performed studies that demonstrated the healthy condition of the riparian wetlands along project impoundment;

5. Threatened and Endangered Species Protection - The continued operation of the hydroelectric project will have no adverse affect on any Federal or State Listed species;

6. Cultural Resource Protection - SHPO initially determined that the hydroelectric project would have no effect on historical/cultural resources, provided the ruined remains of a nineteenth century textile mill, which was destroyed by fire during a flood in 1955, were not disturbed. The Project operation has avoided this area and will continue to do so;

7. Recreation - Public access to the site is limited by the active Providence & Worcester Railroad right-of-way. However, public access is available on the southeast side of the Project impoundment, just upstream from the railroad bridge, via a boat ramp, picnic area and parking lot off of CT Route 12, in compliance with DEP's Recommendations for Terms and Conditions and FERC's Exemption; and

8. Facilities Recommended for Removal - There are no Federal or State resource agency recommendations for removal of the dam associated with the Project.

Consequently, the Department supports the Mechanicsville Hydroelectric Project application for Low Impact Hydropower Certification.

If I can be of further assistance, please let me know.

/s/ Brian GoJembiewski
Environmental Analyst 3