

Connecticut River Joint Commissions

Giving voice to New England's great river

New Hampshire - Connecticut River Valley Resource Commission

Vermont - Connecticut River Watershed Advisory Commission



October 3, 2023

PRESS RELEASE To Residents of Communities along the Connecticut River in New Hampshire and Vermont,

As you may know, the relicensing process for three hydroelectric dams (Vernon, Bellows Falls and Wilder) on the Connecticut River has been ongoing since 2012 and may conclude in the foreseeable future. An official declaration from the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) that the proposed licenses are ready for environmental analysis is expected soon. This declaration will provide an opportunity for public comment on the proposed license and subsequent water quality certificate from both New Hampshire and Vermont.

The Connecticut River Joint Commissions (CRJC) is tasked to plan for and guide the development of the Connecticut River Valley. We view this relicensing process, which will regulate flows in the lower Connecticut River for up to 50 years, as one of the most important actions to affect use of our public trust resource.

Adhering to that responsibility the CRJC and local river subcommittees (LRS) have been participating in the relicensing process since its inception. The LRS includes membership from every riverfront community on the basis of recommendations from the select boards or city councils of their communities. Three of the subcommittee regions - Wantastiquet, Mt. Ascutney, and Upper Valley - represent communities significantly affected by the dams at Vernon, Bellows Falls and Wilder.

We would like you to become engaged in the process and seriously consider what is being proposed and/or what is being omitted. While many avenues for engagement are available, CRJC provides a somewhat unique opportunity. The CRJC and LRS seek to facilitate communication among diverse stakeholders and perspectives through its membership and public participation. Through this process of hearing from diverse speakers and experiences, and providing space for discussion and debate, the CRJC and LRS submit comments that amplify many voices. This is only possible through the participation of resident engagement, YOUR engagement.

The LRS will be hosting presentations and discussion on this topic at meetings over the coming year. The first round will include presentations from the Connecticut River Conservancy (CRC) who has also participated in the relicensing process since its inception. Those discussions are scheduled for – Wantastiquet (Nov 2, 6pm), and Upper Valley (Nov 20, 6pm). Details on how to join in person or virtually can be found at <https://www.crjc.org/events/>. To learn about future meetings, contact CRJC.

Our website has a page dedicated to the relicensing topic. It includes noteworthy facts about these three dams; a history of previous correspondence from CRJC to FERC; details on how to subscribe to updates directly from FERC; and links to CRC and Great River Hydro that also host detailed pages of information. www.crjc.org/activity/dams/

If you have any comments or questions about the relicensing process or how to engage with CRJC on the topic, please do not hesitate to reach out directly.