

**Vermont Agency of Natural Resources  
Department of Environmental Conservation**

NOTICE OF DRAFT DECISION AND PUBLIC HEARING  
BELLOWS FALLS HYDROELECTRIC PROJECT  
*January 22, 2025*

Great River Hydro LLC (GRH) has initiated the process to obtain a new license from the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission to continue to operate the Bellows Falls Hydroelectric Project located on the Connecticut River in the town of Rockingham, Vermont. As part of this process, the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation (Department) is reviewing an application for a Clean Water Act Section 401 Water Quality Certification, required pursuant to the provisions of Section 401 of the federal Clean Water Act, 33 USC section 1341.

Great River Hydro proposes to operate the Bellows Falls Hydroelectric Project to maintain a target water level at the dam and, as a result, maintain flow below the Project equal to the approximate inflow as measured or calculated at the dam (inflow equals outflow or IEO). In addition to IEO Operation, GRH proposes restricted discretionary flexible operation capability, as well as the ability to respond to emergencies and ISO-NE requirements. Additionally, the applicant is proposing additional fish passage measures as stipulated in a fish passage settlement agreement, recreation enhancement at Project related facilities, and the development of a recreation management plan.

The applicant must demonstrate that the project will be in compliance with the Vermont Water Quality Standards by not having an undue impact on the aquatic environment, or the designated and existing uses of the waters of the State. The Department's tentative determination is to grant the certification with conditions to mitigate impacts on water quality.

The Department is welcoming public feedback on this tentative determination, during a no less than 30-day public notice period. All timely feedback will be considered in the formulation of the final decision. Written and voice memo feedback will be accepted at the address or telephone number below, or via e-mail to [Jeff.Crocker@vermont.gov](mailto:Jeff.Crocker@vermont.gov), until **4:30 PM on February 26, 2025**.

**Public Hearing:** A public hearing will be held on **February 12, 2025, at 5:30 PM** at the Lower Theater in Town Hall #7 Village Square Bellows Falls, Vermont 05101. Additionally, an option to **join the meeting via phone** (+1 802-828-7667,539820072#) or virtually can be provided. Persons having an interest in the project and the affected waters are encouraged to attend and provide in person oral testimony, written statements, or data that may bear on the final water quality certification decision. Copies of the draft certification and Water Quality Standards are available by mail or on the Agency website: <https://enb.vermont.gov/>

**For Additional Information Contact**

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The Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation is an equal opportunity agency and offers all persons the benefits of participating in each of its programs and competing in all areas of employment regardless of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, or other non-merit factors. The Lower Theater in the Town Hall is handicapped accessible. Interpreting or listening devices or printed materials in special formats can be made available at the meeting upon request 7 days prior to the meeting. For access assistance, the Department should be called at least a day in advance of the meeting.

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