

FEDERAL ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION
Washington, D. C. 20426

OFFICE OF ENERGY PROJECTS

Project No. 2572-124 –Maine
Ripogenus Hydroelectric Project
Great Lakes Hydro America, LLC

August 30, 2016

Mr. Kevin Bernier
Senior Compliance Specialist
Great Lakes Hydro America, LLC
1024 Central St.
Millinocket, ME 04462

Subject: Minimum Flow Deviation - Article 402

Dear Mr. Bernier:

We received your filing on May 23, 2016, informing us of a deviation in minimum flow release that occurred on May 13, 2016 at the Ripogenus Hydroelectric Project No. 2572. Article 402 of your license,¹ requires you, in part, to release from the project into the West Branch of the Penobscot River, just below the McKay Station, a minimum outage flow of 400 cubic feet per second (cfs) during failure of the generating units at McKay Station. The Article stipulates that you will resume the scheduled minimum flows as quickly and practically as possible, and in no more than three days following the initial outage, by releases from Ripogenus dam, if necessary. You may temporarily modify the minimum flow, if required by operating emergencies beyond your control and for short periods upon mutual agreement between you, the Maine Department of Environmental Protection (Maine DEP) and the Maine Land Use Regulation Commission (Maine LURC). If the flow is modified, you must notify the Commission as soon as possible, but no later than ten days after each incident.

In addition, ordering paragraph (B) of the Order Modifying and Approving Plan for Providing and Monitoring Minimum Flows, requires you, in part, to report any deviation from the streamflows as measured by the approved methods required by articles 401 and 402, to the Commission within 30 days of the date of the deviation.² The report must, to the extent possible, identify the cause, severity, and duration of the incident, and any observed or reported adverse environmental impacts resulting from the incident. The

¹ Order Issuing License issued October 22, 1996 (77 FERC ¶ 61,066).

² Order modifying & approving plan for providing & monitoring minimum flows issued August 19, 1997 (80 FERC ¶ 62,157).

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report must also include: 1) operational data necessary to determine compliance with Articles 401, 402, and 403; 2) a description of any corrective measures implemented at the time of the occurrence and the measures implemented or proposed to ensure that similar incidents do not recur; and 3) copies of correspondence, if any, received from the resource agencies regarding the incident

According to your May 2016 filing, a cross pole arm on the Ripogenus transmission line failed at approximately 12:32 hours. The line failure caused a powerhouse trip reducing flow on the West Branch to approximately 240 cfs. While the station has a system designed to ensure continued minimum flow, that system partially failed as well and activated only two of the three units. A maintenance crew was sent to open crest gates at the dam and restore minimum flows at approximately 14:20 hours. According to your report, you had similar outages last year and had kept a sluice gate open to maintain minimum flows during any potential outages until corrective measures could be implemented. By letter dated January 7, 2016, you notified the Commission that these measures were tested, found acceptable, and therefore closed the sluice gate. However, you believe that the braking system on Unit No. 1 did not hold because the conditions that it was tested under differed than those experienced during the May 13, 2016 outage (higher impoundment level causing increased forces on the unit due to higher head). Lastly, no impacts to fish and wildlife resources were noted and resource agencies were notified and did not provide any comments.

To prevent reoccurrence, a second braking system will be added which will allow increased clamping force on the units. Again, a crest gate will be opened until such time that the system is tested under the other conditions and maintains the correct minimum flow release. In addition, you have developed a long term maintenance program to replace more poles and cross arm components this year and in the future, which should reduce the likelihood of additional failures.

Based upon our review of the available information, the deviation in minimum flow release was caused by equipment failure and will not be considered a violation of Article 402. Your staff took measures to address and correct the situation and no environmental impacts were noted. Your report included information on the date and time of the incident and causes and actions taken to correct the situation. Finally, the report contained recommendations for an enhanced maintenance program to address possible future occurrences. In order to keep the Commission apprised of the testing of the new braking system, please provide a status report on its development by December 31, 2016.

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Thank you for your cooperation and if you have any questions regarding this letter, please contact me at (212) 273-5917 or email at joseph.enrico@ferc.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joseph Enrico". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Joseph Enrico
Aquatic Resources Branch
Division of Hydropower Administration
and Compliance

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