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Subject: P-2572-133 Brookfield Renewable Penobscot River Region
Date: Wednesday, July 29, 2026 8:59:57 PM

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Good evening Laura,

I am writing in regards to FERC docket P-2572-133 for the relicensing of Brookfield Renewable's management of Ripogenus dam, McKay Station and other dams along the West Branch of the Penobscot River.

Originally I was going to copy and paste the comments that I had made on the FERC docket in this letter to you, but I decided instead to write a more personal letter sharing more of my experiences on the West Branch of the Penobscot River. These experiences lead directly to my concerns for its future.

I first visited the West Branch of the Penobscot in 1990 and we stayed at a campsite that sits high above a steep cliff and over looks a great pool called "little eddy" The camp site of course was called the little eddy site. I was only 20 and new to fly fishing but we would stand atop the cliff and watch trophy landlocked salmon jump straight out of the water. I was hooked.

In the 90s the dam was operated by Great Northern Paper and quite often when we would arrive for a camping and fishing trip the water would be very high or nearly flooded and of course we wouldn't like that! I had no idea at that time of the failed plans that GNP had for the BIG A dam. Every once in a while now I will watch the YouTube video on the public pushback and subsequent failed attempt of the dam and think about how lucky we are now to still have this valuable resource

After the 90s I tried to learn as much as I could about the West Branch. I wanted to know as much about the River and its different sections and what I wondered the most was "where did all the water come from?" Prior to internet we had to figure these things out ourselves or from someone else. If the dam wasn't pushing much water how could there be so much River flow? Well finally someone I worked with filled me in and explained the power station.

Management of the River had improved from a DIFW standpoint from those early days. Those first couple of years we stayed at the little eddy fisherman could use standard gear but come the early 2000's it had become flyfishing only with much stricter limits. Gear got better. Nets improved which improved mortality rates. But I guess with the good comes the bad?

About 3 years ago I learned that from time to time McKay station would suffer an unplanned shut down due to many reasons. Lightning strike, power outage, or a number of other reasons I could not begin to explain. There was a Facebook post at that time with pictures of how low the water was showing some fish kills. But what made it worse was that it stayed this way for HOURS. Every time McKay Station has an unplanned shut down due to an unforeseen event it takes hours for someone to get out there to get it back online - and get reasonable water back to the river because there is not anyone living on-site at ripogenus dam and there is no backup generator like you might have at your house.

Last June I was camping at Chewonkis Big Eddy Campground with my youngest daughter and my nephew when we personally witnessed such an event. On 6/17/25 McKay Station lost power for at least 4 hours and the West Branch of the Penobscot went critically low. The River banks went dry. We witnessed an incredible amount of insect life that should have been on the river bottom scrambling for life (water). We put as many as we could into the water but this was handfuls on an entire river system. Fish fry were stranded. The River we love started to stink. This was what I had read about. I can tell you that I would MUCH rather have the high water events from the 90s than a

dry river bed.

On Tuesday 7/28/26 McKay Station had another similar shut down but this was due to a power pole arm FALLING into the woods near McKay station and - if not for the quick action of the seasonal residents of Chewonki Big Eddy Campground - nearly causing a forest fire. Again the river went critically low for hours with insect and fish kills.

I fear that if these events continue the West Branch of the Penobscot will not have a chance of ever being the place the I used to have dreams about after my first few trips. Some say that time has already passed but with my daughter and nephew already in love with it and so many others sharing this great place with the next generation we have to give it a chance. Starving the river of water isnt how its done.

Please read the comments on the FERC docket and consider strongly the relicensing of Brookfield for the Penobscot region. There needs to be minimum water flows. There should be backup generators that will run 4 hours and be able to pass inspections

Finally there are countless pictures and videos out there on this. I have some from last June. Ive seen a bunch from the latest one on Facebook

I do appreciate your time. This is more important to me than you know

Thank you
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