

CHRISTINE KELLER

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Federal Energy Regulatory Commission

Docket # P-2322-069

Regarding: **Proposed removal of Kennebec River dams**

I am writing to you in opposition of the proposal to remove Kennebec River dams in the municipalities of Skowhegan, Fairfield/Shawmut, Waterville and Winslow due to the catastrophic fiscal economic impacts in the entire central Maine region to include major business employers, tax-base/taxpaying residents, and those currently utilizing the existing resources recreationally and as waterfront owners - that will be negatively impacted if this were to proceed. The erosion and railroad destabilization are also contradictory to the preservation this initiative claims to support.

This proposal was put forth in an underhanded and nefarious manner to circumvent the required and appropriate process that should include all entities that will certainly be impacted. It is an outright falsehood to purport this has no fiscal impact, when indeed the toll to central Mainers would be in the multiple millions of dollars. Several municipalities only received notification just days before the original scheduled public hearing – not meeting the straight-face test or existing requirements. This is reprehensible for agents of the State > who swear the same oath of office - as the municipalities they seek to undermine.

- Dam removal proposals are being put forward as no financial or other impact to the municipalities - when in fact there's millions of dollars of impact to the taxable base that will be lost and cannot possibly be made up the alleged fishing/recreation this is purported to create, it is fiction at best.
- Major employers for the entire central Maine region will be crippled: Pan Am Railway, Sappi's & Hutamaki's cooling system would be above water level (millions of dollars to address), both Sappi & Hutamaki have approved & compliant river water system permits issued by the State of Maine; since when does one State agency seek to undermine the authority of a fellow State agency? Since when is this not considered fiscal impact?
- The Lockwood Bridge reconstruction design already underway that incorporates the dam in Waterville/Winslow > thousands of dollars have been spent in design and planning – to just be thrown out as no fiscal impact?
- The Railroad-owned tracks that service Sappi daily > that runs along and in some cases islands over the river will be irreparably destabilized, the comprehensive erosion that would ensue, and infrastructure this would destroy; unfathomable (considering proposal is being touted from an environmental perspective).
- The Skowhegan River Run project > a dozen plus years of investment in the tens of thousands, and time spent. Not to mention the clean energy "green" power that these dams generate. All this amounts to zero municipal impact? Talk about a slap in the face to the entire central Maine region.

The "additional" subsequent fishing licenses they purport will be issued - all to afford salmon access to the Sandy River in Norridgewock/Starks - won't be accessible nor practical with the lowered water levels. Exclusive few will have access opportunities due to primarily private owned waterfront.

And speaking of these private riverfront tax paying property owners - their waterfront property values will drop - not to mention those that have additionally invested in boats, float planes. Erosion will result in more homes being structurally jeopardized given the last dam removed resulted in landslides destroying homes and cemeteries that were falling down into the destabilized and eroding riverbanks. How quickly and conveniently the supporters of this devastation forget! What little money generated in fishing licenses this begets will not offset the millions of tax revenue dollars, central Maine's leading employers' expenses to modify, and property tax value losses for this.

Further - removing existing dams > that already generate power (exponentially far more than neighboring solar farms) - is counter to the many mandated green initiatives. I quite frankly can't understand how this could even be a consideration on the table given this is fully functioning existing infrastructure in our "green" footprint. I'm all for wildlife preservation, but not counter-productive proposals - the pros of this proposal do not outweigh the many cons. Our region cannot sustain such catastrophic financial losses; expenses that will ultimately be placed back onto the taxpayers in several forms, will decimate our major employers/employee base, the funding is not replaceable - nor in line with sustainability or retention of Mainers who might be forced to leave the region as jobs desert.

Shepherding fish to the Sandy River is not the end all solution to save Atlantic salmon either - should dams be removed as proposed, there will be no water left in the Sandy River for them to access - this waterway is already shallow and would be reduced to no more than a trickle if dams were removed. Fishways will provide a much greater opportunity over removal.

Dam removal initiatives have been made based on idealisms, narrow agendas, and without any regard for the catastrophic fiscal and environmental impacts this would have for the Kennebec watershed & Central Mainers in totality - it is irresponsible, reckless - and severely lacking in facts and science.

We each are responsible for the footprint we leave - and pass forward to the future generations, Maine attempts to purport itself to be a leader in these matters of environmentally friendly 'living green', while energy and living costs rise exponentially. We've seen the exodus - Mainers can't afford to live & recreate in our state economically, this lopsided fantasy proposal undermines on every level.

The focus should be turned to fishway implementation compliance; a matter that Brookfield Renewable has and continues to invest millions of dollars in.

We each have our part and responsibility in these economic and environmental matters to do what is right for Maine; her people, our businesses, our leading employers, and for our future generations. I thank you for your time and your careful consideration; please oppose this unrealistic proposal.

Respectfully Submitted,



Christine Keller

Municipal Employee, Lake Board Officer, Kennebec River boating/paddling enthusiast of Central Maine
Registered Voter & Taxpayer, and employee of the specific region that will be negatively impacted