



DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

Federal Energy Regulatory Commission

[Project No. 1904-078]

Great River Hydro, LLC; Notice Establishing Procedural Schedule for Licensing and Deadline for Submission of Final Amendments

Take notice that the following amended hydroelectric application has been filed with the Commission and is available for public inspection.

- a. Type of Application: New Major License
- b. Project No.: 1904-078
- c. Date Material Amendments Filed: December 7, 2020
- d. Applicant: Great River Hydro, LLC (Great River Hydro)
- e. Name of Project: Vernon Hydroelectric Project
- f. Location: The existing project is located on the Connecticut River in Windham County, Vermont, and Cheshire County, New Hampshire. There are no federal lands within the project boundary.
- g. Filed Pursuant to: Federal Power Act, 16 USC 791 (a)-825(r)
- h. Applicant Contact: John Ragonese, FERC License Manager, Great River Hydro, LLC, 40 Pleasant Street, Suite 202, Portsmouth, NH 03801; (603) 498-2851 or [jragonese@greatriverhydro.com](mailto:jragonese@greatriverhydro.com)
- i. FERC Contact: Steve Kartalia, (202) 502-6131 or [stephen.kartalia@ferc.gov](mailto:stephen.kartalia@ferc.gov)
- j. This application is not ready for environmental analysis at this time.
- k. Great River Hydro filed an application for a new license for the Vernon Hydroelectric Project No. 1904 on May 1, 2017. In the license application, Great River Hydro stated that it could not develop a complete licensing proposal for the project since many of the required environmental studies were not complete as of May 1, 2017. Great River Hydro indicated that it would amend the license application after completing additional field work, consultation, and analyses on the required studies. Great River Hydro filed material amendments to the final license application on December 7, 2020.
- l. Project Description: The existing Vernon Project consists of: (1) a 956-foot-long, 58-foot-high concrete dam that includes: (a) 356-foot-long section integral to the powerhouse; and (b) a 600-foot-long overflow spillway section that includes: (i) a 9-foot-high, 6-foot-wide downstream fishway sluice; (ii) a 13-foot-high, 13-foot-wide

trash/ice sluice; (iii) two 20-foot-high, 50-foot-wide tainter gates; (iv) four 10-foot-high, 50-foot-wide tainter gates; (v) two 10-foot-high, 50-foot-wide hydraulic panel bays; (vi) two 10-foot-high, 50-foot-wide stanchion bays; (vii) a 10-foot-high, 42.5-foot-wide stanchion bay; and (viii) eight 7-foot-high, 9-foot-wide hydraulic flood gates; (2) a 26-mile-long, 2,550-acre impoundment with a useable storage volume of 18,300 acre-feet between elevations 212.13 and 220.13 feet National Geodetic Vertical Datum of 1929 (NGVD 29); (3) eight approximately 30-foot-high trashracks with 1.75-inch clear bar spacing and two approximately 30-foot-high trashracks with 3.625-inch clear bar spacing; (4) a 356-foot-long, 55-foot-wide, 45-foot-high reinforced concrete, steel, and brick powerhouse containing four 2-megawatt (MW) vertical Francis turbine-generator units, four 4-MW vertical Kaplan turbine-generator units, and two 4.2-MW vertical Francis turbine-generator units, for a total project capacity of 32.4 MW; (5) ten concrete draft tubes ranging from 16 to 27 feet in diameter; (6) a 500-foot-long, 13.8-kilovolt underground generator lead that connects the turbine-generator units to two step-up transformers; (7) a 984-foot-long, 15-foot-wide upstream fishway; and (8) appurtenant facilities.

Great River Hydro operates the project in coordination with its upstream Wilder Project No. 1892 and Bellows Falls Project No. 1855 and in a peaking mode. Average annual generation is approximately 158,028 MW-hours. Great River Hydro is proposing changes to project operation that would reduce impoundment fluctuations and increase the stability of downstream flow releases relative to current project operation, including targeted water surface elevation levels and flow ramping rates. Great River Hydro proposes several protection, mitigation, and enhancement measures for aquatic, terrestrial, cultural, and recreation resources, and threatened and endangered species. The specific proposed changes are described in the amended application.

m. In addition to publishing the full text of this notice in the Federal Register, the Commission provides all interested persons an opportunity to view and/or print the contents of this notice, as well as other documents in the proceeding (*e.g.*, license application) via the Internet through the Commission's Home Page (<http://www.ferc.gov>) using the eLibrary link. Enter the docket number excluding the last three digits in the docket number field to access the document (P-1904). At this time, the Commission has suspended access to the Commission's Public Reference Room due to the proclamation declaring a National Emergency concerning the Novel Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) issued by the President on March 13, 2020. For assistance, contact FERC at [FERCOnlineSupport@ferc.gov](mailto:FERCOnlineSupport@ferc.gov) or call toll-free, (866) 208-3676 or (202) 502-8659 (TTY).

n. You may also register online at <https://ferconline.ferc.gov/FERCOnline.aspx> to be notified via email of new filings and issuances related to this or other pending projects. For assistance, contact FERC Online Support.

o. Procedural Schedule:

The application will be processed according to the following preliminary Hydro Licensing Schedule. Revisions to the schedule may be made as appropriate.

MILESTONE

TARGET DATE

Commission issues letter identifying application deficiencies and requesting additional information

January 2021

Notice of Acceptance / Notice of Ready for Environmental Analysis

May 2021

Filing of recommendations, preliminary terms and conditions, and fishway prescriptions

July 2021

Reply Comments due

August 2021

p. Final amendments to the application must be filed with the Commission no later than 30 days from the issuance date of the notice of ready for environmental analysis.

Dated: December 16, 2020

Kimberly D. Bose,  
Secretary.

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