



DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY
Federal Energy Regulatory Commission

[Project No. 1889-085]

**Notice of Application Accepted for Filing, Soliciting Motions to Intervene and
Protests, Ready for Environmental Analysis, and Soliciting Comments,
Recommendations, Preliminary Terms and Conditions, and Preliminary Fishway
Prescriptions; FirstLight MA Hydro LLC**

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

- a. Type of Application: New Major License
- b. Project No.: 1889-085
- c. Date Filed: April 29, 2016; material amendment filed December 4, 2020
- d. Applicant: FirstLight MA Hydro LLC (FirstLight)
- e. Name of Project: Turners Falls Hydroelectric Project (project)
- f. Location: The project is located on the Connecticut River in Windham County, Vermont, Cheshire County, New Hampshire, and Franklin County, Massachusetts. The current project boundary includes the approximately 20-acre Silvio Conte Anadromous Fish Laboratory, which is administered by the U.S. Geological Survey.
- g. Filed Pursuant to: Federal Power Act 16 U.S.C. §§ 791(a) - 825(r)
- h. Applicant Contact: Mr. Alan Douglass, Regulatory Compliance Manager, 99 Millers Falls Road, Northfield, MA 01360; (413) 659-4416 or alan.douglass@firstlightpower.com
- i. FERC Contact: Steve Kartalia, (202) 502-6131 or stephen.kartalia@ferc.gov

j. Deadline for filing motions to intervene and protests, comments, recommendations, preliminary terms and conditions, and preliminary fishway prescriptions: 60 days from the issuance date of this notice; reply comments are due 105 days from the issuance date of this notice.

The Commission strongly encourages electronic filing. Please file motions to intervene and protests, comments, recommendations, terms and conditions, and prescriptions using the Commission's eFiling system at <https://ferconline.ferc.gov/FERCOnline.aspx>. Commenters can submit brief comments up to 6,000 characters, without prior registration, using the eComment system at <https://ferconline.ferc.gov/QuickComment.aspx>. You must include your name and contact information at the end of your comments. For assistance, please contact FERC Online Support at FERCOnlineSupport@ferc.gov, (866) 208-3676 (toll free), or (202) 502-8659 (TTY). In lieu of electronic filing, you may submit a paper copy. Submissions sent via the U.S. Postal Service must be addressed to: Debbie-Anne A. Reese, Acting Secretary, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, 888 First Street NE, Room 1A, Washington, DC 20426. Submissions sent via any other carrier must be addressed to: Debbie-Anne A. Reese, Acting Secretary, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, 12225 Wilkins Avenue, Rockville, Maryland 20852. The first page of any filing should include docket number P-1889-085.

The Commission's Rules of Practice require all intervenors filing documents with the Commission to serve a copy of that document on each person on the official service list for the project. Further, if an intervenor files comments or documents with the Commission relating to the merits of an issue that may affect the responsibilities of a particular resource agency, they must also serve a copy of the document on that resource agency.

k. This application has been accepted and is ready for environmental analysis at this time.

l. Project Description: The Turners Falls Project consists of: (1) a 630-foot-long, 35-foot-high dam (Montague dam) that includes: (a) four 120-foot-wide, 13.25-foot-high bascule gates; and (b) a 170-foot-long fixed section with a crest elevation of 185.5 feet National Geodetic Vertical Datum of 1929 (NGVD 29); (2) a 493-foot-long, 55-foot-high dam (Gill dam) that includes: (a) three 40-foot-wide, 39-foot-high tainter gates; and (b) 97.3- and 207.5-foot-long fixed sections with crest elevations of 185.5 feet NGVD 29; (3) a 2,110-acre impoundment with a useable storage volume of 16,150 acre-feet between elevations 176.0 feet and 185.0 feet NGVD 29; (4) a 214-foot-long, 33-foot-high gatehouse that includes six 9-foot-wide, 10.66-foot-high gates and nine 9.5-foot-wide, 12.6-foot-high gates; (5) a 2.1-mile-long, 120- to 920-foot-wide, 17- to 30-foot-deep power canal; (6) a 700-foot-long, 100-foot-wide, 16- to 23-foot-deep branch canal; (7) the Station No.1 generating facility that includes: (a) eight 15-foot-wide bays with trashracks with 2.625-inch clear-bar spacing; (b) four 100-foot-long, 13.1- to 14-foot-diameter penstocks; (c) a 134-foot-long, 64-foot-wide powerhouse that contains five turbine-generator units with a total installed capacity of 5.693 megawatts (MW); (d) four 21-foot-long, 6.5-foot-diameter draft tubes; (e) five 40- to 70-foot-long, 2.4-kilovolt (kV) generator leads that connect the turbine-generator units to a generator bus; (f) a 110-foot-

long, 2.4-kV generator lead that connects the generator bus to a substation; and (g) a 20-foot-long, 2.4-kV generator lead that connects the substation to three transformers; (8) the Cabot Station generating facility that includes: (a) an intake structure with 217-foot-wide, 31-foot-high trashracks with 0.94-inch and 3.56-inch clear-bar spacing; (b) six 70-foot-long penstocks; (c) a 235-foot-long, 79.5-foot-wide powerhouse that contains six turbine-generator units with a total installed capacity of 62.016 MW; (d) six 41-foot-long, 12.5- to 14.5-foot-diameter draft tubes; (e) six 80- to 250-foot-long, 13.8-kV generator leads that connect the turbine-generator units to a generator bus; (f) a 60-foot-long, 13.8-kV generator lead that connects the generator bus to the powerhouse roof; and (g) a 200-foot-long, 13.8-kV generator lead that connects to a transformer; (9) eight 13.6-foot-wide, 16.7-foot-high power canal spillway gates that are adjacent to Cabot Station; (10) a 16.2-foot-wide, 13.1-foot-high log sluice gate in the Cabot Station forebay with an 8-foot-wide weir for downstream fish passage; (11) a 200-foot-long, 7-foot-diameter drainage tunnel (Keith Drainage Tunnel) and headgate; (12) a 955-foot-long, 5-foot-diameter lower drainage tunnel; (13) an 850-foot-long, 16-foot-wide, 10-foot-high fishway (Cabot fishway); (14) a 500-foot-long, 10-foot-wide, 10-foot-high fishway (Spillway fishway); (15) a 225-foot-long, 16-foot-wide, 17.5-foot-high fishway (Gatehouse fishway); and (16) appurtenant facilities.

The Turners Falls Project operates in peaking and run-of-river modes, depending on inflows. Average annual generation from 2011–2019 was approximately 332,351 MW-hours.

FirstLight proposes three changes to the current project boundary: (1) remove 0.2 acre of land associated with residential property; (2) add 0.8 acre of land for recreational purposes; and (3) remove 20.1 acres of land associated with the U.S. Geological Survey's Silvio Conte Anadromous Fish Laboratory.

FirstLight proposes to construct new fish passage facilities and recreational access trails. FirstLight also proposes changes to project operation that would generally reduce impoundment fluctuations and increase flow releases to the portion of the Connecticut River that is bypassed by the project. The specific proposed changes are described in the amended application and the settlement agreements filed on March 31, 2023 and June 12, 2023.

m. A copy of the application can be viewed on the Commission's website at <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. For assistance, contact FERC Online Support.

n. Anyone may submit comments, a protest, or a motion to intervene in accordance with the requirements of Rules of Practice and Procedure, 18 C.F.R. §§ 385.210, .211, and .214. In determining the appropriate action to take, the Commission will consider all protests or other comments filed, but only those who file a motion to intervene in accordance with the Commission's Rules may become a party to the proceeding. Any comments, protests, or motions to intervene must be received on or before the specified comment date for the particular application.

All filings must: (1) bear in all capital letters the title "PROTEST," "MOTION TO INTERVENE," "COMMENTS," "REPLY COMMENTS," "RECOMMENDATIONS," "PRELIMINARY TERMS AND CONDITIONS," or "PRELIMINARY FISHWAY PRESCRIPTIONS;" (2) set forth in the heading the name of the applicant and the project number of the application to which the filing responds; (3) furnish the name, address, and telephone number of the person submitting the filing; and (4) otherwise comply with the requirements of 18 CFR §§ 385.2001 through 385.2005. All comments, recommendations, terms and conditions, or prescriptions must set forth their evidentiary basis and otherwise comply with the requirements of 18 CFR § 4.34(b). Agencies may obtain copies of the application directly from the applicant. A copy of any protest or motion to intervene must be served upon each representative of the applicant specified in the particular application. A copy of all other filings in reference to this application must be accompanied by proof of service on all persons listed on the service list prepared by the Commission in this proceeding, in accordance with 18 CFR §§ 4.34(b) and 385.2010.

The Commission's Office of Public Participation (OPP) supports meaningful public engagement and participation in Commission proceedings. OPP can help members of the public, including landowners, environmental justice communities, Tribal members and others, access publicly available information and navigate Commission processes. For public inquiries and assistance with making filings such as interventions, comments, or requests for rehearing, the public is encouraged to contact OPP at (202) 502-6595 or OPP@ferc.gov.

You may also register online at <https://ferconline.ferc.gov/FERCOOnline.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. The applicant must file no later than 60 days following the date of issuance of this notice: (1) a copy of the water quality certification; (2) a copy of the request for certification, including proof of the date on which the certifying agency received the request; or (3) evidence of waiver of water quality certification.

p. Procedural Schedule: The application will be processed according to the following schedule. Revisions to the schedule will be made as appropriate.

<u>MILESTONE</u>	<u>TARGET DATE</u>
Deadline for filing motions to intervene, protests, comments, recommendations, preliminary terms and conditions, and preliminary fishway prescriptions	April 2024
Deadline for filing reply comments	May 2024

q. Final amendments to the application must be filed with the Commission no later than 30 days from the issuance date of this notice.

Dated: February 22, 2024.

Debbie-Anne A. Reese,
Acting Secretary.

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