

Comments of the Bay State Hydropower Association

Department of Energy Resources Town Hall

March 15, 2024

On behalf of the Bay State Hydropower Association (BSHA), I want to thank Commissioner Mahoney and the Department's leaders who presented for a terrific Town Hall. Exposition of the Department's programs and upcoming activities in specific program areas, as discussed during the online seminar, is extremely helpful and the explicit invitation to become involved reflects a constructive and inviting transparency for the regulated community, our members who have for decades provided clean energy in Massachusetts, and the public.

Bay State Hydropower Association

The BSHA represents most of the hydropower capacity in Massachusetts. Many members have hydropower facilities in other New England states as well. Our members take pride in producing clean renewable energy throughout the region. The facilities they operate have been doing so for many decades.

Hydropower is regulated at the federal level by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC). Under the FERC's guidance, hydro operators consult with and follow the recommendations of Massachusetts regulatory bodies such as the Department of Environmental Protection and MassWildlife. BSHA members are significantly impacted by programs administered by the Department of Energy Resources. Revenue derived through the Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) plays a vital role in supporting the ongoing process of maintaining and improving hydropower facilities and their associated environmental protection infrastructure. Grants from the Clean Energy Center have been indispensable in completing projects that increased clean energy production from existing hydropower.

Highlighted Programs

Given the Town Hall webinar's scope, we do want to highlight several areas of interest for the Massachusetts hydropower community that were touched upon during the presentations.

The new portal for the RPS, described as creating a more efficient application and reporting process, will likely be very important to our members. While not knowing where DOER is in the development of the portal, if appropriate, members of BSHA would be happy to provide real life experience and beta testing of the portal. Similarly, we are interested in the grant program for clean energy, mentioned during the Town Hall. We would like to engage with DOER about this grant program as significant opportunities exist for increasing production at hydropower facilities, while, in many instances, improving their environmental impact.

Another issue of significant importance to our members is the Department's review of the Clean Peak Energy Standard (CPS), which is structured by the enabling statute and DOER rules. For some time, BSHA has been advocating for the removal of the statutorily created "on site" requirement that blocks existing RPS qualified renewable energy generators from full and efficient participation in the creation of electrical energy storage facilities. The removal of the "on site" requirement would allow those Class II vintage facilities (pre-2019 under the CPS statute) to qualify for multipliers as if they were post-2019 facilities. These changes would, among other things, allow two or more of these hydropower facilities to join in cooperative ventures to supply off-site clean energy storage for dispatch at peak demand periods – providing clean energy to replace fossil generation. BSHA's members want to maximize their operations to help the Commonwealth achieve its decarbonization climate change goals and its energy storage goals. The current statute and DOER regulations make that very difficult for existing hydropower and other renewable energy generators.

Requests

A major theme of the Town Hall was to invite more interaction with stakeholders and the public on key DOER programs and their development or reforms. BSHA would like to begin that interaction with DOER on the issue described above and work to support DOER in its efforts to streamline program procedures, processes, and applications; create reforms to more quickly, efficiently, and cost effectively advance the programs essential for decarbonization; and increasing clean energy supply and storage. BSHA members bring substantial skills and real-life experience that the Department could utilize.

To be specific, BSHA would like to directly participate in the CPS review, the storage grant program, the RPS portal (assuming that is still in construction), and programs to develop

more clean energy supply. Below is the contact information for me and for the counsel to BSHA. We look forward to helping the Department achieve its goals that in turn benefit the health of the Commonwealth and the economy.

In separate correspondence we will provide contact information for me and for our counsel Robert Ruddock.

Respectfully submitted,

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