

**FEDERAL ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION**  
**Washington D.C. 20426**

**OFFICE OF ENERGY PROJECTS**

Project No. 2520-069 -- Maine  
Mattaceunk Hydroelectric Project  
Great Lakes Hydro America, LLC

**July 23, 2015**

Mr. Kevin Bernier  
Great Lakes Hydro America, LLC  
26 Katherine Drive  
Hallowell, Maine 04347

Subject: 2014 Interim Species Protection Plan Report

Dear Mr. Bernier:

This acknowledges receipt of your 2014 Interim Species Protection Plan Report, filed with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (Commission) on March 24, 2015. The report is required by Ordering paragraph (D) of the Commission's Order Approving Interim Species Protection Plan<sup>1</sup> (Interim Plan) for the Mattaceunk Hydroelectric Project license.<sup>2</sup>

Under your approved Interim Plan, you are required to file annual reports that document activities taking place under the Interim Plan for the respective year. Specifically, the annual reports are to include: (1) the results of upstream and downstream Atlantic salmon passage and survival studies and any proposed changes to the studies; (2) a summary of consultation with the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) regarding the Interim Plan, including a summary of your daily fishway inspections; (3) an anticipated schedule for filing the Final Species Protection Plan with the Commission; and, (4) descriptions of any issues that may affect the timely completion of any of the elements of the Interim Plan. The first annual report, which documented activities in 2013, was filed with the Commission in 2014. Therefore, your March 24, 2015 report is

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<sup>1</sup> 144 FERC ¶ 62,266 (issued September 26, 2013).

<sup>2</sup> Order Issuing New License. 144 FERC ¶ 62,368 (issued September 30, 1988).

the second report under the Interim Plan and represents actions under the Interim Plan during 2014.

Multiple aspects of your Interim Plan overlap with components of the relicensing process. Inasmuch, the Commission's Division of Hydropower Licensing has undertaken the review and approval of your downstream and upstream Atlantic salmon passage and survival studies that are required by this Plan.<sup>3</sup> Similarly, the Division of Hydropower Licensing is overseeing the modifications of the downstream passage study referenced in your report. Given the Division of Hydropower Licensing's involvement in these studies, we will defer to their review and comments of the 2014 downstream passage study results.

According to your report, you conducted daily inspections of the upstream and downstream fishways between April 1 and November 30 in 2014 and provided weekly inspection reports to NMFS. The inspection reports included descriptions of maintenance activities undertaken at the fishways, capture numbers of Atlantic salmon in the upstream fishway trap, and river and spill conditions. In 2014, only two Atlantic salmon were captured in the upstream fishway trap. You surmise this is due to the Maine Department of Marine Resource's trapping efforts at the downstream Milford Project, which results in fish being captured and transported to a nearby hatchery for broodstock purposes.

Your report also contained an update on the development of a Final Species Protection Plan (Final Plan), as well as a discussion as to whether any schedule changes to the Interim Plan are anticipated in 2015. With regard to the Final Plan, you stated that you will develop the plan as part of the re-licensing process so that it is effective for the term of the new license for the project. At this time, you expect the Final Plan to be finalized in 2018. Until then, you will operate in accordance with the Interim Plan. The only change to the Interim Plan schedule is the timing of the upstream fish passage effectiveness study, which has been delayed until at least 2017 due to a lack of study fish. This decision was made in consultation with the consulting parties in 2014 and is permitted through the adaptive management provision of the Interim Plan.

Finally, your report references a minor modification to the downstream fishway that occurred in December 2014. Following the review of the first year downstream fish passage study report, the consulting parties expressed concern that fish entering the fishway's collection chamber may sustain injury from striking the chamber wall. In response to these concerns, you collaborated with the consulting parties to make a minor

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<sup>3</sup> The upstream and downstream passage study plans were reviewed and approved by the Commission's Division of Hydropower Licensing in its Study Plan Determination, issued on January 10, 2014.

modification to the fishway chamber such that the fish passage pipe, which transports fish from the trashracks to the collection chamber, now extends through the collection chamber and into the tailrace. This modification allows fish to more safely enter the tailrace. When designing and installing the pipe extension, you made the extension removable so that the collection chamber could be used when needed. This modification was made under the adaptive management provision of the Interim Plan.

Your March 24 report satisfies the requirements referenced here within. We look forward to your next annual report, due March 31, 2016. Please be advised that, while Commission staff will continue to review these filings, staff will no longer issue acknowledgement letters for future filings under this license requirement, unless further Commission action is needed. When your future filings for this requirement are posted on the Commission's e-library system, you may consider that as acknowledgment of the Commission's receipt of your submittal.

Thank you for your cooperation. If you have any questions pertaining to this letter, please contact me at (202) 502-6760.

Sincerely,

Joy M. Kurtz  
Aquatic Ecologist  
Division of Hydropower Administration and  
Compliance