



Clean water. Healthy habitat. Thriving communities.

**Connecticut River
Conservancy**

Take Action
for Your Rivers

Share Your Thoughts at the Draft Environmental Impact Statement In-Person Comment Sessions!



On May 30th, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) released two Draft Environmental Impact Statements (DEIS) which examine the environmental impact of the Great River Hydro projects in VT and NH and the FirstLight projects in MA. In these DEIS's, FERC staff identify the primary issues to be:

- Shoreline erosion along the Connecticut River
- Water quantity, including how the volume of peaking flows and magnitude of water surface fluctuations in the Connecticut River affect aquatic habitat and recreation access
- Fish passage
- Protection of threatened and endangered species
- Protection of cultural resources

In addition to or in lieu of sending written comments, you can attend an **in-person** public comment session that will be held to receive oral comments on the DEIS. The primary goal of these comment sessions is to have you identify the specific environmental issues and concerns with the DEIS. Although there will not be a formal presentation, FERC staff will be available throughout the comment session to answer your questions about the environmental review process.

FirstLight In-Person Public Comment Sessions

July 16, 2025

Session A: 9am - 11am

Session B: 6pm - 8pm

Greenfield Community College
One College Drive
Greenfield, MA 01301

Great River Hydro In-Person Public Comment Sessions

July 17, 2025

Session A: 1pm - 3pm

Session B: 6pm - 8pm

Bellows Falls Opera House
7 Village Square
Bellows Falls, VT 05101

[**Read the FirstLight DEIS**](#)

[**Read the Great River Hydro DEIS**](#)

Summary of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement Process



The DEIS is a long and dense document. In this 17-minute video, Kathy, Marilla, and Nina break down the topics covered in the DEIS, highlight main points of concern, and share background information and next steps.

[**Watch the Short Video Here**](#)

UPDATE: Comment Deadline Extended to August 28th, 2025!



Due to the scope and scale of the five projects, CRC and others requested a modest 30 day extension on the comment period for the draft Environmental Impact Statements to allow the public to fully and adequately consider and provide meaningful comments. This request was granted!

**All comments must be filed on or before
5:00pm EST on August 28, 2025.**



The Commission strongly encourages electronic filing. Please file comments using the Commission's [eComment](#) or [eFiling](#) system.

eComment Option: Limited to individuals filing up to 10,000 characters of text-only comments on their own behalf.

eFiling Option: You must have or create an account and use this system if you are filing:

- On behalf of a company, agency, organization, association, or other non-individual
- Comments exceeding 10,000 characters
- Non-text material (exhibits, photos) or file attachments

How to File a Comment

CRC is on the air to talk through the 401 WQC Appeals in VT and NH



Brattleboro Community Television (BCTV) invited Kathy Urffer and Marilla Harris-Vincent on the show to discuss the recent appeal of the Clean Water Act's Section 401 Water Quality Certification in VT and NH.

During this interview, Kathy and Marilla go over the rationale for the appeal and give a brief overview of the relicensing process that has been ongoing for 13 years. The interview is fun and informative, so check it out!

[Watch the Interview Here](#)

[Learn More About the Appeal in VT/NH](#)

[Learn More About the Appeal in MA](#)

Turners Falls Drawdown Update



FirstLight Temporarily Drained the River to Perform Dam Repairs at the Turners Falls Dam

In early June [445 gallons of hydraulic fluid entered the Connecticut River](#) when one of the gates at the Turners Falls Dam malfunctioned. On the night of July 7th, FirstLight drew the river height down to expose the gate in order to perform repairs, approximately 6 feet below the permitted low operating pool elevation of 176 feet.

Nina, CRC's MA River Steward, received phone calls and talked to community members along the river who said that the drawdown eroded riverbanks, left aquatic species stranded in the mud, and cancelled recreational plans during peak vacation season. Before the drawdown

began, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Connecticut River Conservancy requested that FirstLight carry out a mussel recovery effort, which they thankfully did, however wildlife were still harmed in the process—such as catfish and mussels in locations that were not tended to. The dam repairs are now complete and the river is refilling.

If you are upset about how the river is being treated, please consider writing comments on the draft Environmental Impact Statement to help ensure that the river, critters, and communities receive the best possible protections in the new operating license FirstLight will receive.

[Draft EIS Info Here](#)

Support the Once-in-a-Generation Fight to Protect the Connecticut River!



The Connecticut River Conservancy and partners—including American Rivers, Conservation Law Foundation, American Whitewater, and Vermont Natural Resources Council—are advocating for the Connecticut River in a legal process to ensure the new licenses for 5 hydropower facilities provide essential protections for the river’s health, flows, habitats, and recreation for the next 30-50 years! CRC has appealed the Clean Water Act §401 Water Quality Certifications in VT, NH, and MA to make sure that the state agencies do their job and protect our river for the next several decades.

Your contribution is critical for the Connecticut River's future. Wins in this court process will result in specific requirements that are written into the federal licenses impacting 175 miles of the river. We NEED YOUR HELP to get the best possible license for the Connecticut River.

Join us and donate below!

Connecticut River Advocacy Fund



Kathy Urffer
(she/her)
VT River Steward
kurffer@ctriver.org
802-258-0413



Nina Gordon-Kirsch
(she/her)
MA River Steward
ngordonkirsch@ctriver.org
413-834-9777



Marilla Harris-Vincent
(she/her)
NH River Steward
mharrisvincent@ctriver.org
603-503-0419

Connecticut River Conservancy
15 Bank Row | Greenfield, MA 01301

The Connecticut River Conservancy (CRC) restores and advocates for clean water, healthy habitats, and resilient communities to support a diverse and thriving watershed. CRC has been a steward of the Connecticut River and tributary streams since 1952. Through collaborative partnerships in New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, and Connecticut, CRC leads and supports science-based efforts for natural and life-filled rivers from source to sea. Learn more at ctriver.org.



DONATE

[Subscription Preferences](#)