

FEDERAL ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20426
November 13, 2023

OFFICE OF ENERGY PROJECTS

Project No. 4679-050—New York
Vischer Ferry Hydroelectric Project
New York Power Authority

VIA Electronic Mail

Rob Daly
Director of Licensing
New York Power Authority
Robert.Daly@nypa.gov

Reference: Summary of Technical Conference

Dear Mr. Daly,

Enclosed is a summary of the technical conference conducted by Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (Commission) staff on November 8, 2023. The technical conference was held to provide clarification to New York Power Authority regarding additional information needs identified by Commission staff for the Vischer Ferry Hydroelectric Project No. 4679.¹

¹ Commission staff's letter requesting additional information is available at: https://elibrary.ferc.gov/eLibrary/filelist?accession_number=20230807-3020&optimized=false.

If you have any questions concerning this letter, please contact Jody Callihan at (202) 502-8278 or jody.callihan@ferc.gov.

Sincerely,

Jody Callihan, Project Coordinator
Mid-Atlantic Branch
Division of Hydropower Licensing

Enclosures: Summary of technical conference and list of attendees

SUMMARY OF TECHNICAL CONFERENCE

Vischer Ferry Hydroelectric Project

FERC No. 4679-050

On November 8, 2023, from 1:00 p.m. to 2:05 p.m. (Eastern Standard Time), representatives from the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (Commission or staff); New York Power Authority (NYPA); Kleinschmidt Associates, WSP, GEI Consultants, and Gomez and Sullivan, all consultants for NYPA; and several individuals from other organizations, participated in a technical conference to discuss the Vischer Ferry Hydroelectric Project. A list of meeting attendees is included at the end of this meeting summary.

The purpose of the meeting was for Commission staff to provide clarification to NYPA regarding additional information needs that were identified by Commission staff in a letter issued on August 7, 2023 (August 2023 AIR letter). NYPA indicated to staff that it wished to discuss two items (specifically, items 2 and 3) of the August 2023 AIR letter.² Below we summarize each item in the order discussed.

Prior to discussing the items, NYPA gave a Powerpoint presentation detailing the modifications it proposes to make to the project's dams and operation, focusing on the proposed installation of inflatable crest gates on each of the project's three spillways to minimize ice-jam-induced flooding in the project vicinity. At the conclusion of the meeting, NYPA stated it would file a copy of its presentation; staff recommended that any design drawings (e.g., of the proposed crest gates) be filed separately as Critical Energy Infrastructure Information.

Summary

Additional Information Request (AIR) item 2—Engineering Analysis

Commission staff indicated to NYPA that, consistent with item 2 of the August 2023 AIR letter, an engineering analysis is needed that provides a comparison and evaluation of the expected differences in downstream discharge and water surface elevations between existing and proposed operating conditions. NYPA noted that, during flood flows, it expects the total discharge from the project—with the crest gates in place and operating—to be similar to existing discharge levels but indicated to staff that it would still complete the requested analyses.

² See https://elibrary.ferc.gov/eLibrary/filelist?accession_number=20231025-3022&optimized=false.

Commission staff asked NYPA if there were any limitations on running the turbine units during winter (e.g., in a manner that could lead to differences in upstream or downstream discharge levels relative to existing conditions). NYPA stated that due to the relative high capacity of the project’s spillways compared to the turbine discharge, it does not expect any limitations on running the units during winter beyond the occasional unit trips, which are largely unavoidable.

Lastly, Commission staff indicated to NYPA that if the requested engineering analysis indicates discharge levels are similar under existing and proposed conditions, it may not be necessary to evaluate flooding impacts on individual structures.

AIR item 3—Stability Analysis

NYPA indicated it plans to conduct the stability analysis requested by item 3 of the August 2023 AIR letter but is waiting for the Commission to approve—as part of a separate Part 12 proceeding—the input parameters it intends to use to complete the requested stability analysis. NYPA further noted that, pending this approval process, it may need additional time (beyond the February 7, 2024 deadline established in the August 2023 AIR letter) to complete the stability analysis. Staff noted that, if this occurs, NYPA may file, with the Commission, a request for an extension of time to file the stability analysis and a revised Supporting Design Report, which should include the stability calculations for the proposed changes.

List of Meeting Attendees

Commission Staff

Jody Callihan, John Smith, Monir Chowdhury, Vishnu Vishnukanthan, Matthew Lehrer, Katherine Adnams, Claire Rozdilski, Devan Mahadevan, Walid Abdulla

NYPA

Michael Deegan, Robert Knowlton, Tara Groom, Sean Koetzner, David Weiman, John Skilling, Rob Daly, Alex Brey, Brian Platt, Ketan Ragalwar, Andrew Sumner, Jessica Kirby

Kleinschmidt Associates (Engineer of Record)

Keenan Goslin, Lucas DeLong, Toby Tardif

WSP (Program Manager)

Billy Chaparro, Felipe De Melo

Gomez and Sullivan (Technical Consultant)

Jerry Gomez, Kevin Miller

GEI Consultants (Technical Consultant and Current Independent Consultant)

Lee Wooten, PJ Snyder, Matt Farren, Will Lukas

Others

John Garver (Union College), Nicole Cain (New York State Department of Environmental Conservation), Nick Hanson (New York State Canal Corporation), Howard Goebel (local citizen)