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BONACIC URGES FEDS TO FORCE CITY TO MOVE FASTER ON HYDRO PLANT

By *John J. Bonacic*
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September 17, 2009: State Senator John J. Bonacic (R/I/C – Mt. Hope) has filed comments with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission in opposition to the City of New York’s plan to use what is known as the “Traditional Licensing Process” to try and obtain a license for the City’s use of their reservoirs for hydropower.

The Delaware County Electric Cooperative has long sought to develop hydro based energy from the City reservoirs – something the City has vigorously opposed. Now, New York City is claiming they wish to undertake a hydro electric powered project at four of its reservoirs – Schoharie, Neversink, Cannonsville, and Pepacton.

“The hydro power capable of being generated by the City’s reservoir could have tremendous benefit to our region. We have a capable entity – the Delaware County Electric Cooperative - that could have been working nonstop on this already. Instead, we see the City dragging its feet because they really did not want to deal with the hydro power issue. They only applied for the right to use the reservoirs for hydro power, so that local electric cooperative in the Catskills would not be able to,” Senator Bonacic said.

Instead of the City’s seeking to use the standard application process, known as an Integrated Licensing Process (ILP), the City is seeking Federal permission to use a less public process which allows for less input from the watershed region.

“A slower, less public process is clearly not in the best interest of the people of the watershed and surrounding communities,” Senator Bonacic said.

In addition to Senator Bonacic, United States Senator Charles Schumer and Congressman Maurice Hinchey have also weighed in urging the City to move faster.

Senator Bonacic has heard from officials in both Delaware and Sullivan Counties in opposition to the City’s efforts. “Our local officials are rightly concerned that a hydro power project could be developed in their back yard – at the Neversink Reservoir, without a real opportunity for them to participate and in a way which does not guarantee the best local benefits.”

Town of Neversink Supervisor Greg Goldstein has also urged FERC to require the City to use the ILP because it provides for more stringent timelines in developing the hydro project and ensuring public access. “Hundreds of millions of gallons of water lie above the people of our local

communities. We want the hydro capacity managed right. The DEP has resisted local efforts to do that, and is now jumping into it, solely to ensure that the City controls the issue,” Goldstein said.

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Senator:

John J. Bonacic [1]
Authored by Senator
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Energy



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