

December 21st, 2017

To: Kinnickinnic River Corridor Planning Committee
Re: Proposal - License Surrender "Leaving the Facilities in Place" with subsequent Dam Removal

Dear Kinni Corridor Planning Committee,

You are at the helm of this community planning process as it is reaching a culminating moment. Thank you all for your dedication to our community, to our river, and to this process. Friends of the Kinni has been actively engaged with you over the past 18 months in this Corridor Planning Process. Previously, our organization worked closely with the City, stakeholder groups, and regulatory agencies to navigate through the City's initial relicensing attempt for our hydroelectric facility, a process that began over four years ago and resulted in the license amendment (extension) application being granted by FERC.

We are writing today in strong support of the complete restoration of the Kinnickinnic River through removal of both of our dams. We propose:

- 1) Develop a recommendation to the City Council for surrender of the license for the River Falls Hydroelectric Project, FERC Docket #P-10489
- 2) Pursue license surrender through a "petition for license surrender leaving the facilities in place" without ever entering a new relicensing process with FERC (such as the ILP), leverage support from stakeholder organizations for said petition for license surrender agreeing to remove the dams after surrender, and decommission the hydroelectric facility under FERC authority. ⁽¹⁾⁽²⁾
- 3) Develop plans for, and implement, the restoration of the Kinnickinnic River through dam removal under the local jurisdiction of the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources after license surrender

We make this proposal specifically because there is a significant difference between the process for surrender of a FERC license during a relicensing process while pursuing dam removal under FERC jurisdiction compared to the process for surrender of a FERC license for a minor project when not in a relicensing process, where "no changes on the ground" are planned while under FERC jurisdiction. The latter option is far more straightforward, less expensive, and maintains local authority.

Universal stakeholder support will be attainable for this proposed action. If the City instead decides to pursue relicensing, overwhelming opposition from stakeholder organizations and our community can be expected.

Throughout the Kinnickinnic River Corridor Planning Process we have learned a great deal of important information about our dams, about the Kinnickinnic River, and about our community! We have learned there is substantial community support for dam removal among a very well-informed and engaged population.

We have learned that our dams do not provide other benefits beyond generating hydroelectricity. Our dams do not provide flood control, they do not support valuable wildlife habitat, they do not improve recreation, they do not provide water storage or a water source, they do not enhance navigation, nor do they improve aesthetics.

Dam removal will restore a full mile of a highly valuable cold-water aquatic ecosystem, improve the trout habitat of the Lower Kinni, reduce flood levels, improve navigation, increase multiple recreational opportunities, improve storm-water management, and dramatically increase aesthetics through the restoration of a free-flowing stream and waterfall in the heart of our City of River Falls!

A joint workshop of the Utility Advisory Board and the City Council was held on December 9th, 2014. There was an "Executive Summary" developed by TRC Solutions weighing our community's options presented at that workshop.⁽³⁾

At that time, our community decided to pursue Option #1 – "FERC License Extension & Community Planning Process" in order to consider alternative futures for the hydro facility, including potential dam removal, while developing a comprehensive Kinnickinnic River Corridor Plan.⁽⁴⁾

This option was selected at that time because it was the least expensive option which also allowed for the greatest amount of flexibility in future decision making, in that it did not take any options off the table and in fact put the option for dam removal on the table.

Our current cost estimate of \$440,000 for license surrender assumes the pursuit of license surrender via a relicensing process where dam removal would proceed under FERC jurisdiction (such as the ILP). According to the Executive Summary, with a cost estimate of \$24,000 to \$236,000 the next least expensive and least complicated option available to our community moving forward is actually to pursue Option #4: "License surrender with Facilities in Place".⁽³⁾

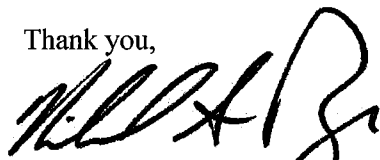
TRC Solutions says themselves in their informational brochure on license surrender:

"FERC hydroelectric license surrenders, decommissioning and dam removals have become increasingly common in recent years as aging infrastructure, changing energy policies, and environmental considerations have made these options often less expensive than relicensing and continued maintenance and operation."⁽⁵⁾

Our proposal for license surrender offers a means for our community to move forward in a highly collaborative fashion with multiple supporting stakeholders toward the future of the Kinnickinnic River in the heart of the City of River Falls.

Your thoughtful consideration and dedication to this process is greatly appreciated!

Thank you,



Dr. Michael S. Page, President
Friends of the Kinni

References:

[available online]

(1) FERC "How to Surrender a License or Exemption"

[<https://www.ferc.gov/industries/hydropower/gen-info/comp-admin/surrender.asp>]

(2) Section 6.1 of the Commission's Regulations

[<https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?c=ecfr&SID=d1d900931105bc2cfae09ae117a98548&rgn=div8&view=text&node=18:1.0.1.2.11.0.20.1&idno=18>]

(3) "Executive Summary"

[<http://www.rfcity.org/DocumentCenter/View/1290>]

(4) Application for Amendment of the License

[<http://www.rfcity.org/DocumentCenter/View/1497>]

(5) TRC Companies: "FERC Hydroelectric License Surrender, Decommissioning and Dam Removal"

[<https://www.trcsolutions.com/writable/images/services/FERC-Hydroelectric-License-Surrender.pdf>]

To:

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