

Memo

To: Members of the Brunswick Town Council
From: Thomas M. Farrell, Director

Date: January 29, 2025
Re: *Androscoggin River Fish Passage Resolution*

Town Manager, Julia Henze and I have met previously with Mr. Chip Spies regarding the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) ongoing process to relicense the Brunswick Topham Hydroelectric Dam just upstream of the town's 250th Anniversary Park. We have a similar interest in improving public access to the river as well as improving the access both up and downstream for its fisheries.

Manager Henze and I both attended FERC project scoping meetings held in the spring of 2024 and subsequently submitted comments on behalf of the town with respect to a variety of town recreational projects that exist within the impoundment area of this dam. The dam operators have an obligation to address public recreational access in these impoundment areas as part of the regulatory review process.

The water quality in the river has improved over many years and contributes positively to the quality of life our residents experience as well as the fisheries and wildlife that depend on it. As the river continues to improve, we find more people boating, fishing and recreating upon and adjacent to it. A continued commitment to improving both recreational access around and fish passage at the current dam will only make our community a more desirable place for people to live and visit.

Additionally, improving fish passage at the current dam will allow more fish to reach critical spawning areas and habitats thus leading to an increase in fish populations. Such growth in fish numbers support biodiversity, providing ecological and economic advantages for communities, especially those communities reliant on healthy fisheries for recreational fishing and commercial harvest.

Accompanying this memo is a copy of a draft resolution regarding improving fish passage at our downtown dam. The resolution has been supported by four Town Council appointed Commissions/Committees and is being forwarded to you for consideration.

I will attend the February 3rd meeting of the Town Council to answer any questions that Councilors may have about the draft resolution and the town's participation to date in the FERC relicensing process.