

## Uncommon Dialogue on Hydropower, River Restoration, and Public Safety

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### May 2022 Update

The following email provides updates on recent and upcoming activities within the Uncommon Dialogue (UCD) on Hydropower, River Restoration, and Public Safety.

#### WG 6 Improve Federal Hydropower Licensing, Relicensing, and License Surrender Processes

The Licensing Reform Group – composed of the lead drafters of the Working Group 6 package and key members of Working Group 7 – continues to work toward the introduction in Congress of a bipartisan licensing reform bill based on the WG 6 package (<https://woods.stanford.edu/research/hydropower/hydropower-ucd-core-agreements>) on dam licensing, relicensing, and license surrender. The group is engaging multiple offices in the House and Senate; high-level staff in the departments of Energy, Interior, Commerce, Agriculture, and at the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission; the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies; conservation organizations; and others.

On May 12, the Energy Subcommittee of the House Energy and Commerce Committee held a hearing on hydropower licensing, focused on the WG 6 package. Uncommon Dialogue leaders Mary Pavel, Tom Kiernan, and Malcolm Woolf testified, representing Tribes, the conservation caucus, and the hydropower industry, respectively. More details on the hearing, “Modernizing Hydropower: Licensing and Reforms for a Clean Energy Future,” including witnesses' written testimony and video of the full hearing, are available at the Energy and Commerce Committee website (<https://energycommerce.house.gov/committee-activity/hearings/hearing-on-modernizing-hydropower-licensing-and-reforms-for-a-clean>) .

#### Steering Committee (SC) and Planning Group (PG)

The Planning Group met in May to discuss next steps for licensing reform legislative coordination, and strategic next steps for the other working groups. The group also discussed ideas for a meeting of all Uncommon Dialogue participants in the next several months. The Planning Group will continue to meet monthly to strategize on the Uncommon Dialogue process.

## Working Group (WG) 1 Accelerate Development of Hydropower Technologies and Practices to Improve Generation Efficiency, Environmental Performance, and Solar and Wind Integration

The Technologies Working Group Co-Chairs are completing a final round of edits and review of a White Paper on Technology to advance the 3Rs. The Co-Chairs have incorporated feedback heard from industry and Lab participants and engaged representatives from the E-NGO Caucus for their perspective and edits to the paper. The revised White Paper will be distributed soon to WG 1 and the Steering Committee for voluntary sign-on.

## WG 2 Dam Safety

The Dam Safety Working Group leads are developing a game plan for addressing this topic. This work is expected to ramp up in the second half of 2022.

## WG 3&5 Increase Basin-Scale Decision-Making and Access to River-Related Data and Advance Effective River Restoration through Improved Off-site Mitigation Strategies

In May, the Basin-Scale Subgroup continued to develop a Guidance Document outline for basin-scale planning and management. The Subgroup will present a draft outline of the Guidance Document to the full WG 3&5 during a meeting on June 22. The WG 3&5 meeting will also include an update on the WG6 FPA package content related to off-site mitigation, as well as a discussion of river-related data.

## WG 4 Improve the Measurement, Valuation of, and Compensation for Hydropower Flexibility and Reliability Services and Support for Enhanced Environmental Performance

WG 4 co-chairs began to plan upcoming conversations to build consensus around and further explore an array of focus areas. In the coming months, WG4 members will meet to discuss enhanced environmental performance, grid valuation, Idaho National Lab's Power Evaluation Tool, and methane emissions.

## WG 7 Policy, Strategy, and Implementation of the 3 Rs (Rehabilitation, Retrofit, and Removal)

Members of the WG 7 Legislative and Communication Team are working in three areas: Developing legislative actions and strategies to support the 3Rs (dam rehabilitation, retrofitting, and removal); monitoring and supporting agency implementation of the 2021 Infrastructure Bill so that it reflects the intent of the UCD 3Rs language in the bill, which included more than \$2.3 billion in funding for the 3Rs; and conducting outreach and engagement with the press to promote the 3Rs. On May 6, the Washington Post published a feature on retrofitting non-powered dams, "Giving old dams new life could spark an energy boom," (<https://www.washingtonpost.com/climate-solutions/2022/05/06/dams-nonpowered-hydropower-energy/>) that quoted UCD participants Kelly

Catlett (American Rivers), Colleen McNally-Murphy (Hydropower Reform Coalition), LeRoy Coleman (National Hydropower Association), and Paul Jacob (Rye Development). On June 2, eight UCD participant organizations sent to the House and Senate appropriations committees urging support for a collection of 3R funding priorities. The WG 7 Legislative and Communication Team continues to meet every other week. If you are interested in participating, please reach out to Katy Kennedy at [kkennedy@kearnswest.com](mailto:kkennedy@kearnswest.com) (<mailto:kkennedy@kearnswest.com>) .

### Tribal Engagement

Tribes and Tribal organizations were very engaged in the WG6 License Reform package, and some provided letters of support for the package that was sent to Congress. Tribes will continue to be engaged throughout the License Reform process and other topics as part of the Uncommon Dialogue.

If there are others you think would like to get engaged with the Uncommon Dialogue, please forward their contact information to Katy Kennedy ([kkennedy@kearnswest.com](mailto:kkennedy@kearnswest.com) (<mailto:kkennedy@kearnswest.com>) ).

For more information on the Uncommon Dialogue, refer to Stanford's Uncommon Dialogue website: <https://woods.stanford.edu/research/hydropower>.

Please feel free to contact Dan Reicher ([dreicher@stanford.edu](mailto:dreicher@stanford.edu) (<mailto:dreicher@stanford.edu>) ) or Kelsey Rugani ([krugani@kearnswest.com](mailto:krugani@kearnswest.com) (<mailto:krugani@kearnswest.com>) ) if you have any questions!