

Uncommon Dialogue on Hydropower, River Restoration, and Public Safety

June 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 towards 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-documents>) on dam licensing, relicensing, and license surrender. The group has engaged multiple offices in the House and Senate as well as staff in the departments of Energy, Interior, and Commerce, and at the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission. The group continues to work to expand the base of support for the package through briefings and one-on-one conversations. On July 6, four former FERC commissioners and chairs sent a letter (https://woods.stanford.edu/sites/g/files/sbiybj5821/f/ferc_commissioner_letter_of_support_for_hydropower_licensing_reform_package.pdf) to Congress in support of the licensing reform package. On July 14, leads of the ENGO, Tribal and industry caucuses

briefed environmental NGOs on the package. Members of the licensing reform group briefed the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies on June 17, and the Interstate Council on Water Policy on July 14.

Steering Committee (SC) and Planning Group (PG)

The Planning Group met in June 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 the Plenary Group (formerly the Steering Committee) planned for late November/early December. 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 Co-Chairs of WG1 shared the WG's final product: a white paper on potential technology research. The white paper—titled Innovative and Advanced Hydropower Technology Can Improve Environmental Performance, Generation Efficiency, and Grid Resilience—highlights innovative approaches to a climate-ready, river-friendly hydropower industry that operates safe and resilient U.S. infrastructure. The paper focuses primarily on opportunities for innovations and technologies in hydropower, as well as dam safety and dam removal. This is followed by proposed actions and next steps to advance two of the 3Rs: Rehabilitate and Retrofit, while highlighting the need for continued research into the third R: Removal.

The paper represents the efforts of the Working Group in coordination with experts across the Uncommon Dialogue and perspectives from both the Industry and Conservation caucuses. It is currently being reviewed by the Plenary Group and WG1 members for voluntary sign-on before being published online for public viewing on the Stanford Woods Institute for the Environment website on the Uncommon Dialogue.

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

WG 3&5 met on June 22. WG members received an update on off-site mitigation items included in the WG 6 Licensing Reform Package (<https://woods.stanford.edu/research/hydropower/hydropower-ucd-core-documents>) . WG 3&5 will consider forming an Off-Site Mitigation Subgroup pending FERC input on the off-site mitigation items included in the package. The WG discussed how to integrate prior efforts focused on river-related data into the WG and agreed to continue this conversation at future meetings. The Basin-Scale Subgroup shared a draft outline of a Basin-Scale Licensing, Planning, and Resource Management Guidance Document and requested feedback from WG members. The Subgroup will develop a full draft Guidance Document later this summer.

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

WG 4 met the last week of June and the first week of July to explore an array of focus areas. Nick Miller (Hickory Ledge) provided a briefing on the NREL report “The Future Role of Hydropower in the Northeastern United States (<https://www.nrel.gov/docs/fy22osti/80168.pdf>) .” WG 4 members also met to provide feedback on the latest developments to INL's Power Evaluation Tool (PET, or

Hydropower Flexibility Tool) and began to explore areas of consensus surrounding enhanced environmental performance. In the coming months, working group members will continue to explore these topics. The group is also continuing to work on consensus-building on methane emissions from hydropower projects; a subgroup of WG 4 members is drafting a concise document that summarizes key areas of scientific agreement.

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, retrofit, 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, including more than \$2.3 billion for the 3Rs; and conducting outreach and engagement with the press to promote the 3Rs. The WG 7 Team is currently focused on developing a joint response to the Department of Energy Request for Information (RFI) on 2021 Infrastructure Bill programs that will invest in hydroelectric facilities was released on June 30, 2022. The WG 7 Caucus Leads will meet periodically through July and August to discuss the RFI, develop a joint Uncommon Dialogue response, and will share the joint response with Uncommon Dialogue members for sign-on at the end of August. 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>).

Tribal Engagement

Tribes and Tribal organizations were very engaged in the WG 6 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. Individual tribal meetings are also occurring with the Tribal leads from WG 6 to address concerns and clarify the License Reform package. All interested tribes who would be interested in scheduling additional briefings should contact Morgan Lommele at mlommele@kearnswest.com (<mailto:mlommele@kearnswest.com>).

Updated Website

The Uncommon Dialogue website hosted by the Stanford Woods Institute for the Environment has been reorganized and updated: <https://woods.stanford.edu/research/hydropower-home>.

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>)).

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>)) or Kelsey Rugani (krugani@kearnswest.com (<mailto:krugani@kearnswest.com>)) if you have any questions!