

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

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### July 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 the current session of Congress of a bipartisan licensing reform bill based on the WG 6 package on dam licensing, relicensing, and license surrender (<https://woods.stanford.edu/research/hydropower/hydropower-ucd-core-documents>). The group has engaged multiple offices in the House and Senate as well as staff in the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission and the departments of Energy, Interior, and Commerce. 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 Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (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](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.

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

The Planning Group met in July to discuss next steps for licensing reform legislative coordination and 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 WG1 Co-Chairs are working on a communications plan to build awareness of the recently completed White Paper on Technology. The Co-Chairs have been receiving rolling endorsements for the paper and encourage Uncommon Dialogue participants to consider signing-on if they or their organizations have not already done so. The Paper will soon be made available publicly on the

Stanford Woods Institute website. Please contact Mark Anthony Sebarrotin (msebarrotin@kearnswest.com (mailto:msebarrotin@kearnswest.com) ) for more information.

## WG 2 Dam Safety

On behalf of Working Group 2, Kearns & West is currently conducting interviews with leaders from all sectors who are interested and involved in safety oversight, rehabilitation, retrofit, and removal of dams. WG2 outcomes could include federal or state policy initiatives, research or white papers, R&D initiatives, proposed technology advancements, or others. WG2's vision is to:

- \* Improve the safety of U.S. state-regulated dams through research and development.
- \* Build a collaborative model grounded in principles of shared learning and dialogue.
- \* Encourage the federal government to provide its substantial expertise and resources to states to improve safety at state-regulated dams.
- \* Identify other ways to advance dam safety in the U.S. and encourage appropriate action.

The interviews would result in improving understanding of dam safety challenges and opportunities in the U.S. and a potential Fall/Winter 2022 workshop to collaboratively develop recommendations for action.

## 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

The WG 3&5 Basin-Scale Subgroup is working on developing a full draft of the Basin-Scale Licensing, Planning, and Resource Management Guidance Document that was shared with WG 3&5 members in June. The Subgroup plans to complete the draft by September and will review it with WG members at the next WG 3&5 meeting, to be scheduled this fall.

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

WG 4 will be following up on three recent subgroup meetings on grid valuation, the Idaho National Laboratory Power Evaluation Tool (PET) and enhanced environmental performance. The Enhanced Environmental Performance Subgroup plans to meet twice more in the coming months, working towards the development of supportive policies and/or incentives. WG4 will also continue to work on consensus-building on greenhouse gas emissions from reservoirs, with a subgroup of WG 4 members drafting a document that summarizes key areas of scientific agreement.

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

Working Group 7 is currently focused on developing a joint response to the recent Department of Energy Request for Information (<https://www.energy.gov/articles/biden-administration-launches->

630-million-programs-modernize-nations-hydropower-fleet) (RFI), which seeks public feedback to guide the nearly \$630 million in investments in hydropower facilities from the 2021 bipartisan infrastructure bill that will flow through the Department of Energy (DOE). The WG 7 Caucus Leads are working to develop a joint Uncommon Dialogue response. In addition, the legislative leads of WG 7 are meeting to develop a strategy to advance the 3Rs tax credit package that was introduced in 2021 as part of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Dams Act. The WG 7 Legislative and Communication group continues to meet every other week, with a focus on tracking and supporting agency implementation of the \$2.3 billion for the 3Rs included in the 2021 infrastructure bill. The group is also developing a legislative strategy for the coming year. 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 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) (<mailto:mlommele@kearnswest.com>) .

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!