

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

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### August 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 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.

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

The Planning Group met in August to discuss ideas for a meeting of the Plenary Group (formerly the Steering Committee) planned for late 2022/early 2023. 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 has finalized the White Paper on Technology and have distributed it to Uncommon Dialogue members. The Paper is available on the Stanford Woods Institute website ([https://woods.stanford.edu/sites/g/files/sbiybj5821/f/innovative\\_and\\_advanced\\_hydropower\\_technology\\_can\\_improve\\_environmental\\_performance\\_generation\\_efficiency\\_and\\_grid\\_resilience.pdf](https://woods.stanford.edu/sites/g/files/sbiybj5821/f/innovative_and_advanced_hydropower_technology_can_improve_environmental_performance_generation_efficiency_and_grid_resilience.pdf)) . Please contact Mark Anthony Sebarrotin ([msebarrotin@kearnswest.com](mailto:msebarrotin@kearnswest.com)) (<mailto:msebarrotin@kearnswest.com>) for more information.

## WG 2 Dam Safety

Kearns & West conducted interviews with stakeholders in the dam safety space, in order to inform potential upcoming areas where the Uncommon Dialogue could add value to efforts to improve and raise awareness around dam safety. Although just a few interviews have been conducted to date, preliminary interview findings indicate that the Uncommon Dialogue could contribute to the field of dam safety through research, promoting improved federal agency coordination and evaluation frameworks, training resources, and increasing visibility into dam safety risks. Working Group 2 hopes to refine a process and next steps in the coming months.

## 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 Basin-Scale Subgroup members will be hosting an in-person workshop on basin-scale planning at (<https://cleancurrents.org/parrotwp/basin-scale-planning-and-off-site-mitigation/>) the Clean Currents conference in Sacramento on Tuesday, October 18 from 1:00 – 3:00 pm. Uncommon Dialogue participants are encouraged to attend and share feedback and ideas on basin-scale planning and resource management. If you can't attend but are interested in learning more about the workshop and/or sharing insights in advance, please contact Mary Beth Day ([mbday@kearnswest.com](mailto:mbday@kearnswest.com) (<mailto:mbday@kearnswest.com>)). In addition, the Subgroup continues to develop 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 October and will review it with WG members at the next WG 3&5 meeting, to be scheduled later 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)

In August, members of Working Group 7 prepared a joint Uncommon Dialogue 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 sought 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).

On Sept. 6, the group submitted the joint response ([https://woods.stanford.edu/sites/g/files/sbiybj5821/f/joint\\_uncommon\\_dialogue\\_rfi\\_comments.pdf](https://woods.stanford.edu/sites/g/files/sbiybj5821/f/joint_uncommon_dialogue_rfi_comments.pdf)) with endorsements from eight Uncommon Dialogue participant organizations from the industry, dam safety, and ENGO-T caucuses. In addition, WG 7 members are working to advance Uncommon Dialogue legislative priorities, including the 3Rs tax credit package that was introduced in 2021 as part of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Dams Act, and the reauthorization of the National Dam Safety Program. 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. 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!