

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

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### Fall 2022 Update (December 2022)

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. Currently, the WG 6 drafting team is reviewing a draft bill provided by Senate legislative counsel.

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

The Planning Group continues to meet monthly to strategize on Uncommon Dialogue progress and next steps.

#### 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 distributed the Working Group's white paper ([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)) to the full Uncommon Dialogue and are developing a communications and outreach plan to promote the release of the paper.

#### WG 2 Dam Safety

As work within Working Group 2 ramps up, leads have been preparing scenarios to narrow down the potential work areas for the Working Group in 2023. The Working Group hopes to identify ways in which the Uncommon Dialogue can address dam safety and removal through coordination,

legislation, policy, research, and communications to complement and support existing efforts. Potential work areas include advancing state policy agendas around dam safety and removal, identifying gaps in agency coordination around and evaluation of dam safety and removal, addressing dams with particular safety risks, improving the inventory of dams at risk of failure, and creating visibility into dam safety risks.

### 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

Basin-Scale Subgroup members completed the first draft of their white paper, A Basin-Scale Approach to Planning and Licensing: Options, Considerations, and Recommendations. The draft is currently under review within the Basin-Scale Subgroup. The next WG 3&5 meeting will be scheduled for later this Fall once an updated draft of the white paper has been shared with the full WG for their review.

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

WG 4 plans to meet twice more in the coming months, working towards the development of a joint policy paper on enhanced environmental performance. WG 4 will also continue to pursue discussions on the Idaho National Laboratory Power Evaluation Tool (PET) and work on consensus-building around greenhouse gas emissions from reservoirs, with a subgroup 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 September, members of Working Group 7 submitted 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). 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 (NDSP). WG 7 convened a working meeting on NDSP reauthorization at the Association of State Dam Safety Officials conference in September and held a briefing for UCD participants on November 1. 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

Tribal engagement in the Uncommon Dialogue is ongoing, with a focus on boosting meaningful Tribal engagement in Working Groups that will be active in 2023.

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!