

# Uncommon Dialogue for Hydropower Phase II

July 2021 Steering Committee Update

Greetings Steering Committee and Working Group Members,

The following provides an update on recent and upcoming activities of the Uncommon Dialogue (UCD) for Hydropower Phase II process.

- **Steering Committee (SC):** The next SC meeting will take place September 16. Potential agenda topics for the meeting include: Working Group (WG) updates, longer-term planning for the UCD process and adopting the SC Charter (which will be circulated prior to the meeting).
- **WG 7 Policy, Strategy, and Implementation of the 3 Rs (Rehabilitation, Retrofit, and Removal):** This month, WG7 moved to a caucus structure, with representatives from the following three caucuses: Dam Safety, Environmental NGOs and Tribes, and Industry. The purpose of the caucus structure is to provide a clear decision-making process for WG7 as it pursues legislative work. July was an eventful month on the legislative front, with the introduction of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Dams Act in the House and Senate:
  - On July 9, 2021, Representatives Annie Kuster (D-NH) and Don Young (R-AK) introduced [House Bill 4375](#), the *21<sup>st</sup> Century Dams Act*, which includes the four concepts outlined in the 12-page document developed by WG7 in April: dam safety, tax incentives, dam removal and investment in federal dams. See the press release [here](#) and the bill language [here](#).
  - The next week, on July 15, 2021, Senators Dianne Feinstein (D-CA), Alex Padilla (D-CA), Ron Wyden (D-OR), Debbie Stabenow (D-MI), Gary Peters (D-MI), Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY) and Michael Bennet (D-CO) introduced companion legislation in the Senate that includes three of the four concepts (dam safety, dam removal and investments for the federal fleet). See the press release [here](#) and the bill language [here](#).
  - Senators Maria Cantwell (D-WA) and Lisa Murkowski (R-AK) introduced [Senate Bill 2306](#), the *Maintaining and Enhancing Hydroelectric and River Restoration Act of 2021*, on June 24, 2021. This bill would create new federal tax incentives to encourage safety, environmental, and grid resiliency upgrades for hydropower dams. See the press release [here](#) and the bill language [here](#).
  - WG7 is also continuing to work on the Senate Bipartisan Infrastructure Framework (BIF), which would provide funding for the 3Rs as part of major bipartisan infrastructure legislation.
- **WG 6 Improve Federal Hydropower Licensing, Relicensing, and License Surrender Processes:** The WG 6 Drafting Team continues to meet to draft legislative language based on revisions to sections of the Federal Power Act, also known as the “Rocket Docket.” The Drafting Team expects to share a full draft with the full WG 6 in September.
- **WG 4 Improve the Measurement, Valuation of and Compensation for Hydropower Flexibility and Reliability Services and Support for Enhanced Environmental Performance**
  - The Enhanced Environmental Performance (EEP) Subcommittee Co-Chairs met on July 26 and agreed that the EEP Subcommittee will shift their focus away from Clean Energy Standards (CES) and explore other potential topics such as reservoir methane emissions and “carrots” incentivizing activities at hydropower projects that go “above and beyond” pure compliance to achieve improved environmental outcomes. [Note: plans are underway for a broader workshop on methane]

- The Grid Valuation Subcommittee Co-Chairs met in July and are in the process of conducting an informal literature review to gain a better understanding of what information is out there, and where the Subcommittee could focus its efforts. The next Subcommittee meeting will take place in August or September.
- **WG 1 Accelerate Development of Hydropower Technologies and Practices to Improve Generation Efficiency, Environmental Performance, and Solar and Wind Integration:** The WG is refining a white paper on four priority topics associated with technology investments: Environmentally-focused Designs, Grid Integration and Flexibility, Digitalization, and Repair/Retrofit Technologies. A WG1 meeting was held on August 4<sup>th</sup>.
- **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 Co-Chairs will be meeting with the WG 6 Co-Chairs on August 10th to discuss linkages and potential areas of overlap between the two groups. The second WG 3&5 meeting will be scheduled after this discussion, which may help inform the next steps for this WG.
- **Tribal Engagement** for Phase II included a 6/28 Tribal participation call where the group received an update on all WG progress, and identified additional outreach needed to representatives from NCAI and United South & Eastern Tribes, the Penobscot Indian Nation, the Chippewa Ottawa Resource Authority, the Caldwell First Nation, Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs, San Luis Rey Band of Mission Indians, among others. Tribal engagement opportunities include calls every two months with a cross-section of tribes, some who are actively involved in one or Working Groups and some who cannot be actively involved, but appreciate this standing call to hear updates.
- **Next Steps**
  - Discussions are underway on WG 2 Improved U.S. Dam Safety.

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