

August 7, 2014

Secretary Kimberly D. Bose

Federal Energy Regulatory Commission

888 First St., N.E.

Washington, D.C. 20426

FERC Docket # P-2685-026

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SECRETARY OF THE
COMMISSION

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FEDERAL ENERGY
REGULATORY COMMISSION

Dear Secretary Bose,

The Town Board of Middleburgh would like to request the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission to consider the following suggestions regarding the relicensing of the New York Power Authority at the Blenheim-Gilboa site.

The Town of Middleburgh is situated down stream and north of the Blenheim-Gilboa, (BG) site. We are the recipient of any release that is made at BG and have been severely impacted by the operation of BG and their releases. We request that a complete hydrological study be performed by an independent organization. Our request for this study comes from the fact that the average yearly precipitation has increased since the BG project was first completed and also that development in BG's drainage basin has resulted in greater run-off. Many new ski trails have been added to resorts, countless miles of roads and driveways paved, the addition of new homes adding more impervious surfaces and the increased amount of ditching required for all of the afore mentioned development. It is our position that flood mitigation is essential to BG's new license.

The Town Board of Middleburgh requests that FERC recognizes that climate change is impacting our environment to the extent that in 45 years we have already witnessed 2 historic floods and feel that a 50 year license is way too long given the most recent weather events. we request that FERC issue only a 30 year license that can be reviewed every 10 years.

Since our Town lies downstream of BG and so do 4 other towns in the county, we request that BG provide an allotment of power to either offset electric rates for these towns or that can be sold to provide economic stimulus to encourage business growth in the county. The towns of Blenheim, Fulton, Middleburgh, Broome, Schoharie, Wright, and portions of the towns of Berne and Rensselaerville are presently without a regional supermarket because of the flood from Hurricane Irene in 2011. Many of our other businesses suffered along with our residents and school districts resulting in a loss of tax revenue that then overburdened remaining residents. The money derived from a power allotment would be crucial to not only these towns but to help other towns in the county since it would form a pool of funding that towns could apply for

to help jumpstart new business.

The Town Board requests that BG regularly engage in emergency response drills with local ambulance and fire departments. It has been brought to our attention that BG has not invited the Middleburgh Volunteer Fire Department for a drill or site tour in many years. If there were an emergency, both the fire department and the ambulance squad are totally unfamiliar with the BG facility and furthermore the response time for ambulance response to their facility puts their own employees at risk. BG should, for the sake of their own employees, house an ambulance that could be used by first responders in the area that would service their facility and also be used for the surrounding public thus being a good neighbor. It was noted that since 1989, BG has given \$560,000 to emergency services. This sounds like a lot but only results in about \$23,000 per year and a good bulk of that being since 2011 and post Irene. Given the number of emergency services in the county that it was divided between and the fact that some of the equipment donated was used, does not add up to an impressive amount.

The Town Board requests that FERC requires BG to provide an environmental study to insure that adequate conservation and agricultural releases of water are regularly performed and that provisions are incorporated for recreational releases as well. The Schoharie Creek is a valuable asset for tourism providing fishing, canoeing, and kayaking. Our Village of Middleburgh has recently reinstated a canoe and kayak race which brings in several hundred visitors. Expansion of this event is being planned possibly turning it into a two day event. It is important that an adequate supply of water be available and that the BG facility be required to make timed releases if necessary. Important also is the need for the conservation release to provide adequate flow for the aquatic life of the stream to flourish in a habitat that requires the correct flow and temperature.

The Town Board requests that BG help fund a hydrological study of the lower Schoharie Creek to see if there are any possible projects that could be done to help alleviate flooding along its path to the Mohawk. There may be places where diverging could be done to allow storage of water in areas that would not affect residences, or dredging of gravel bars to allow for increased flow. Since Hurricane Irene, we are very uncertain what to expect for even a 30,000 cfs flow because of the major changes due to Irene.

The Town Board requests that BG help provide a maintenance fund for the multi-use trail that is planned to be constructed using funding from NY Rising that will help promote tourism by connecting Esperance, Schoharie, Middleburgh, Fulton, Blenheim and Gilboa. This will provide a hiking and biking route during the warmer months and cross country skiing and snow shoeing during the winter across the county connecting scenic nature vistas, local businesses, campgrounds, parks, farm markets, diners and restaurants. Along the path, educational signs will be identifying the flora, incorporate an outdoor classroom, and point out places of historical importance. The route will stay as close to the creek as possible but find its way to the villages

to help promote the economy and also allow the users access to facilities they might require.

The Town Board of Middleburgh would like to thank Secretary Bose for her consideration and time. We are a small rural town and can only hope that FERC will help build a better relationship between BG and the Schoharie County communities.

Respectfully,

The Town Board of Middleburgh

James S. Buzon, Supervisor



Susan Makely, Frank Herodes, David Lloyd, Council members

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