

Robert W. Olsen, Jefferson, NY.
Re: P-2685-026

Dear Sir or Madam:

The New York State Power Authority (NYPA) study plan strikes one as being of the same authorship as Grimm's Fairy Tales. Maintaining that the site be evaluated or assessed as vacant land is ludicrous at best. Eminent domain and threats to use the practice were used to take land for the pump storage facility thus depriving farmers the opportunity to conduct their business and removing properties from the tax rolls. North Blenheim, the host community, suffered a severe loss both culturally and economically. The NYPA attempt at self evaluation cannot be permitted to stand. An independent appraisal must be conducted.

The NYPA Blenheim/Gilboa project installation is also a hazard to Blenheim and communities downstream of the facility. In 2011 the lower reservoir was close to being overtopped which would have resulted in not only tremendous property damage but significant loss of life. Added to the hazard presented by the lower reservoir is the upper, man-made, reservoir. Failure of the upper dam would certainly cause the lower dam to fail. Such an event would destroy not only North Blenheim but also communities located upstream. Breakabeen, Middleburgh, Schoharie and beyond would suffer immeasurable damage, probably to an extent beyond hope of recovery. Impacts would be felt into the Mohawk River corridor.

The Schoharie Valley is a functioning, rich agricultural area that is historically and economically important. The NYPA study plan ignores the value of the North Blenheim Historic District or sites such as The Stockade in Schenectady, New York that lie in the path of dam failure or flood. While NYPA would like to maintain that they have no role to play in flood control they have gone out of their way to underscore their role in controlling the flood waters entering and leaving their facility. It appears that NYPA wants to play both hands in the card game.

NYPA has treated Blenheim with disdain and arrogance for nearly half a century at this point. It is time they support the host community and compensate for the losses they induced or be denied the license renewal they seek.

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