North American Megadam Resistance Alliance

Protecting rivers and their communities by resisting megadams and their transmission corridors

Visit our website to learn more about our alliance, supporters, and work

February 2020 Newsletter

Current News:

A two-part groundbreaking series supported by the Pulitzer Center on New England's increased demand for dirty Canadian hydropower and resulting impacts on Indigenous communities and the environment was recently published by many outlets. To create this series, reporters traveled to the homes of NAMRA allies in Labrador and joined our alliance in New Brunswick at the 2019 Conference of Northeastern U.S. Governors and Eastern Canadian Premiers (CONEG).

New England's drive for Canadian hydropower threatens native population's way of life

As the impacts of the climate crisis worsen, environmentalists have increased their efforts to push political leaders towards ambitious climate goals. In many states, a key component of meeting these goals includes importing dirty Canadian hydropower which is often falsely advertised as clean and green. Front line communities to the north of New England know all too well the cost that hydropower comes with. To many Indigenous communities, damming projects which generate this electricity is just the latest form of the ongoing colonization of their people.

Native population protests, face arrests in their stand against Canadian hydropower

Megadams not only wreak havoc on the environment through erosion, flooding,
that are an essential part of Indigenous culture through the release of the neurotoxin methylmercury. A 2016 Harvard University study shows that ninety-percent of proposed Canadian hydroelectric projects may expose local Indigenous communities to harmful levels of methylmercury. Those on the frontlines of the fight against megadams are fighting for the survival of their people and culture and have faced arrests, jail time, and even restraining orders as a result of peaceful protests.

Proposal for Maine hydro transmission line going on the 2020 ballot: Voters to decide the fate of the 145-mile extension cord from Canada to Massachusetts

The controversial, ill-named "New England Clean Energy Connect" (NECEC) transmission corridor (CMP corridor) which is planned to bring dirty electricity produced by Hydro-Quebec from Canada to Massachusetts faces yet another challenge. Grassroots activists have collected 76,000 signatures for a statewide ballot question for November 2020. If verified by the Secretary of State, Maine voters will have the chance to decide on the project's future. The project also requires a permit from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and faces at least two court challenges to regulatory approval. Hydro-Quebec has been fined $35,000 by Maine for ethics violations relating to the state's campaign finance laws.


A report recently released by Energyzt, and a coalition of environmental, energy, and labor groups including the Sierra Club, exposes the falsehoods behind the claims that the Champlain Hudson Power Express (CHPE) is good for the climate and the economy. CHPE is another extension cord to bring Canadian hydropower to the Northeast, a sister project to NECEC [see story above]. The report shows the transmission line will not reduce climate-related emissions and, in fact, may increase overall emissions. Like NECEC, CHPE is controversial and has been challenged as a shell game being played by multinational corporations at the expense of frontline communities in Canada.

Upcoming Events:

World Water Day
In coordination with Wa Ni Ska Tan: An Alliance of Hydro-Impacted Communities, NAMRA will celebrate World Water Day by holding a press conference and speaking forum open to the public discussing local and international water extraction issues, megadams, and climate change.

Press Conference

When: Friday, March 20th, 10:30 - 11:30 am EST  
Where: Maine State House Welcome Center, Augusta, Maine  
Why: Maine and the rest of New England are at a pivotal point in their transition from fossil fuels to clean energy. Unfortunately, many states are choosing to accept the false climate solution known as large hydropower. Join us as we bring our message to politicians to hold CMP accountable, conduct a full greenhouse gas assessment on the New England Clean Energy Connect transmission line, and meet with legislators to educate them on what is happening on the other side of the CMP extension cord.

Speaking Forum

When: Sunday, March 22nd, (exact time TBA)  
Where: Portland, Maine (exact location TBA)  
Why: Join us in celebrating World Water Day as we learn more about water extraction in local and international communities, the CMP corridor, Canadian megadams, and the connections these issues all have with climate change. This event will feature Indigenous and allied water protectors, climate activists, and others who will share their stories with breakout for small group discussions. Speakers include land and water protectors Tommy Monias from Pimicikamak Cross Lake in Manitoba, Dawn Neptune Adams a member of the Penobscot Nation, Lisa Savage a Maine organizer and environmentalist and other Indigenous and allied water protectors and climate activists.

Take Action:

Volunteer with NAMRA! We need writers, fundraisers, and organizers to help
• **Donate to or volunteer with Say NO to NECEC**

This grassroots non-profit organization is an environmental education and advocacy group opposed to large-scale industrial development in western Maine. They specifically oppose Central Maine Power's proposed New England Clean Energy Connect transmission corridor which will bring electricity produced by megadams in Canada through Maine to Massachusetts.

• **Write a letter to local politicians and news outlets to express your opposition to NECEC**

• **Contact New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio** to express your opposition regarding the city's plans to procure electricity produced by megadams in Canada via a transmission corridor known as the Champlain Hudson Power Express. This corridor would be built by Blackstone subsidiary TDI from Quebec to Queens. Contact the Mayor and let him know that Canadian hydropower is NOT clean energy and is not a fair and equitable climate solution. Send an online message or call 212-NEW-YORK if outside the city, or 311 if in the city. You can also send a written letter to:

  Mayor Bill de Blasio  
  City Hall  
  New York, NY 10007

• **Donate** to the North American Megadam Resistance Alliance to help us continue this important work.

• **Sign and share NAMRA’s petition** calling on leaders throughout the Northeast U.S. to reject dirty Canadian hydropower.

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**Recent Efforts:**

North American Megadam Resistance Alliance & Wet'su'weten Solidarity

On Friday, February 21, an international alliance of land and water protectors held a series of solidarity actions across Canada and New England to stand with the Wet'suwet'en People in their struggle against extreme energy development and to raise awareness about climate justice and the role of extreme energy development in contributing to the climate emergency and cultural genocide of Indigenous people.

We honor Wet'su'weten actions raising awareness about land and water
and forests for 100 years by building massive megadams and causing cultural genocide. Hydro is extreme energy extraction-using rivers and land for private profit. It is a climate disaster.

Land and water protectors stand in solidarity against extreme energy extraction and for climate justice in New England.

Carlton Richard and other land and water protectors march in solidarity with the Wet'suwet'en People and for climate justice in Canada.

• NAMRA representative attends Youth Voices Day and Maine Climate Council Meeting at the Augusta Civic Center

On January 29th, 2020 Maine Youth for Climate Justice and Maine Climate Action Now held the Youth Voices Day which coincided with the Maine Climate Council's meeting. The purpose of this event was to give youths opportunities to network with other active youth across the state, become familiar with the Maine Climate Council and their work, meet Climate Council members, and support youth representatives on each of the Council's Working Groups. A NAMRA youth representative attended this event to network and discuss how large hydro should not be a part of any just climate solution.

• NAMRA representatives assist with Say No to NECEC Signature Drives

NAMRA representatives have assisted with collecting signatures to get the CMP corridor on the November 2020 ballot. With enough signatures collected and
Quick Facts on Hydro:

- The world's large dams emit **104 million metric tonnes** of methane annually from reservoir fluctuations, spillways, turbines, and rivers downstream making them responsible for at least 4% of the total warming impact of human activities and 23% of all methane emissions from human activities. Megadams are the single largest anthropogenic source of methane release.

- 66% of the longest rivers in the world no longer flow freely due to dam construction and operation. The fragmentation of rivers is extremely harmful to the environment, climate, and traditional ways of life for many front-line communities.

- At least **1,680** dams across the U.S. pose a potential risk of failure.

Commentary

Worldwide awareness about megadams is growing by leaps and bounds as frontline communities stand up to the multinational corporations that continue to spread falsehoods that hydro is clean, green and renewable. Too often, the debate over whether to build a transmission line to import more Canadian hydropower excludes the voices of the frontline communities who have experienced the flooding of their homes, displacement and in the north, loss of livelihoods that depend on being able to survive off the land. In the words of Labrador Land Protector Marjorie Flowers, **Canadian hydropower is the equivalent of blood diamonds in Africa.** Our alliance is about bringing those impacted voices to the fore. We do this through our networking with groups such as **Wa Ni Ska Tan: An Alliance of Hydro-Impacted Communities.**

It's great news from Maine --- 76,000 voters support the idea that people, not bureaucratic regulatory agencies and politicians making closed-door deals should be able to decide the state's future. Volunteers spent countless hours throughout Maine collecting signatures and educating Maine voters. People are standing up to power and exposing the truth behind bad deals like NECEC, despite the corporate money -- NECEC spent **$2.3 million** promoting the corridor over three months and Hydro-Quebec spent **$228,000** on a PAC to support the corridor. Hydro-Quebec was recently **fined** by the Maine ethics commission for failing to report $100,000 of this spending.

Twenty-five Maine towns now oppose the corridor along with the Androscoggin
the CMP corridor and in Franklin and Somerset Counties where the project would cut a new 53-mile corridor through pristine forests, 80% oppose it.

Similar to CHPE in New York (see report above), NECEC is a greenwash. It will not reduce greenhouse gas emissions and it may even make it worse. Hydro-Quebec cannot deliver on its climate promises and Central Maine Power has fought every effort to have an independent greenhouse gas study completed.

Thank you for your interest in our work!
- The Editors