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Contact: Jared Margolis, Center for Biological Diversity, (802) 310-4054, [jmargolis@biologicaldiversity.org](mailto:jmargolis@biologicaldiversity.org)  
 Margaret Sheehan, North American Megadam Resistance Alliance, (508) 259-9154,  
[coordinator.namra@gmail.com](mailto:coordinator.namra@gmail.com)  
 Matt McPherson, Innu Nation of Labrador, (416) 981-9343, [MMcPherson@oktlaw.com](mailto:MMcPherson@oktlaw.com)

## Regulators Warned of Champlain Hudson Power Express Project's Environmental Impact

### ***Burying Power Cable in Hudson River Will Harm Threatened Atlantic Sturgeon, Bring Dirty Hydropower From Quebec***

NEW YORK— Conservation and social justice groups and First Nations today filed a [formal notice letter](#) with the U.S. Department of Energy over its failure to fully address the environmental impacts of the proposed Champlain Hudson Power Express Canadian hydropower transmission corridor.

The proposed project involves constructing a 1,000-megawatt high-voltage transmission line through lakes and rivers — including Lake Champlain and the Hudson River — to transmit power generated from dams in Canada to load centers in New York. The notice letter states that the Department of Energy has unlawfully failed to reinstate Endangered Species Act consultation after critical habitat was designated for endangered Atlantic sturgeon in the Hudson River, which would be torn apart to bury the power line, risking contamination from buried pollutants.

“This misguided attempt to bring Canadian hydropower to New York would devastate critical habitat for endangered Atlantic sturgeon in the Hudson River,” said Jared Margolis, a senior attorney at the Center for Biological Diversity. “New York can’t bury its head in the sand and pretend that this is a ‘clean’ energy project. This project will have a huge impact, not only to endangered species in the Hudson but to Indigenous communities in Canada, without providing significant climate benefits.”

Today’s letter was filed on behalf of the Center for Biological Diversity, North American Megadam Resistance Alliance and the Innu Nation of Labrador. The notice urges regulators to consider the full range of impacts from the proposed project, including those in Canada such as the eradication of salmon spawning runs, loss of boreal forest and wetlands through flooding, and carbon and methane emissions from decaying organic matter in flooded areas.

Today’s letter also notes that the Department’s environmental impact statement for the project failed to address impacts to Indigenous communities in Canada as well as climate impacts and loss of wildlife habitat associated with the construction of new dams in Canada to supply power for the project.

Activities like flooding forests, building artificial reservoirs to impound rivers and streams, road-building and clearing transmission line corridors would destroy wildlife habitat and put millions of tons of methane and CO<sub>2</sub> into the atmosphere. New science has emerged about the greenhouse gas emissions associated with northern boreal reservoirs, indicating that emissions from hydroelectric dams are higher than previously reported.

“Hudson River sturgeon must be protected. No one should destroy their critical habitat,” said Meg Sheehan, coordinator for the North American Megadam Resistance Alliance. “CHPE construction activities must not commence. We demand a new and thorough environmental review. It is insane to continue destroying rivers anywhere for any reason, especially now, during our planetary climate and species extinction emergency. New York can build better with locally produced electricity and efficiency programs consistent with its stated climate justice principles.”

Large hydropower dams in Canada flood wildlife habitat and traditional hunting grounds for Indigenous groups and cause environmental harm by releasing methylmercury into the environment, posing significant risks to the health of people and wildlife. For decades, long-term mercury contamination from Canadian hydropower development has been an important environmental and health issue, particularly for Indigenous and local communities that rely on local food sources. The impacts to these communities were completely ignored by the Department when it reviewed the project.

One-sixth of the hydroelectricity that Hydro-Quebec plans to sell to New York via the project comes from the Upper Churchill hydroelectric Project. The reservoir created by the Upper Churchill project flooded an area of Innu lands the size of the state of Delaware.

“Our elders, many of whom have passed away, experienced terrible loss after the Churchill Falls generating station was built,” said Innu Nation Grand Chief Etienne Rich, “The impact of Churchill Falls has been felt across generations of Innu.”

“Damming Churchill Falls and flooding the lakes above them destroyed the Meshikamau area’s waters and lands,” said Innu Nation Deputy Grand Chief Mary Ann Nui. “It destroyed our use of the area. It destroyed the habitats of animals living there. The Innu were not consulted about this flooding, and we certainly did not consent to it. The injustice is still raw for us all.”

*The Center for Biological Diversity is a national, nonprofit conservation organization with more than 1.7 million members and online activists dedicated to the protection of endangered species and wild places.*

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