



Rivers Alliance of Connecticut

ENERGY & TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE PUBLIC HEARING, March 12, 2009

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Bill 1103 AA REDEFINING CLASS I RENEWABLE ENERGY SOURCES

Rivers Alliance is the statewide, non-profit coalition of river organizations, individuals, and businesses formed to protect and enhance Connecticut's waters by promoting sound water policies, uniting and strengthening the state's many river groups, and educating the public about the importance of water stewardship.

Dear Chairmen Nardello and Fonfara and Members of the Committee:

Bill Number 1103 proposes to extend the definition of Class I Hydropower to include additional power up to 10 MW generated by efficiencies in existing plants. Increases in efficiency, along with reduction in demand, are the keys to solving numerous problems associated with climate change and energy costs. Moreover, this bill specifically requires approval by the Low-Impact Hydropower Institute, which is for us the paramount standard.

This road to reform has been effectively closed off due to Public Act 03-135, which limited Class hydropower to small (less than 5MW), new facilities. This is a formula for maximum river disturbance with the least gain in green energy. The good feature in PA 03-135 was that it did call for run-of-the-river operations.

A second major barrier for rewarding improvements in hydro efficiency is that the premium price for generation of clean energy is market-based. Therefore, the more Class I clean energy that is produced, the lower the value in the market. In our efforts to create more clean, green hydropower, we have been accused of flooding the market with Class I energy. Apparently, this is a very bad thing to do.

Rivers Alliance welcomes Bill 1103, although we must oppose it as written. **This is the right time for this distinguished Committee to insist on a more rational, effective means to promote high-quality, low-impact hydropower.** There are numerous other statutory and regulatory problems related to hydropower.

Last year, Rivers Alliance was honored to join with the Clean Energy Fund and other partners in a hydropower conference. We urge the committee to create a steering group of stakeholders to make recommendations for statutory changes in order to bring to Connecticut the maximum benefits of hydropower.

Margaret Miner, Executive Director