

April 15, 2019

Amy Shallcross
Delaware River Basin Commission
P.O. Box 7360
West Trenton, NJ 08628-0360

Dear Ms. Shallcross,

Friends of the Upper Delaware River (FUDR) is the only professionally staffed organization in the Upper Delaware River watershed working every day to protect, preserve and enhance the cold-water ecosystem and the economy of the Upper Delaware River Watershed and to address all environmental threats to our area for the benefit of local communities, residents and visitors to the region.

We thank you for the opportunity to participate, through the Subcommittee on Ecological Flows (SEF), on FFMP 2017 Study 2.1 (June 1, 2019) to determine the best use of the Thermal Mitigation and Rapid Flow Change Mitigation banks. We also appreciate this chance to comment on the rest of the FFMP 2017 General Study Work Plan and the Draft Salinity Study Statement.

FFMP 2017 General Study Work Plan

We understand that the 2017 FFMP requires three studies to be completed during the first five-year period, which ends in 2022:

- 1) Potential detachment of releases from the New York City Delaware Reservoirs from the position of the salt front during drought emergency (2.3, May 2022);
- 2) Increasing New Jersey's Diversion during drought conditions (2.4, December 2022); and
- 3) Increasing or optimizing storage available for the lower basin for flow augmentation (2.5, December 2022).

We also understand that three additional studies can happen concurrently or in the second five-year period, which ends in 2027:

- 1) volume of the ERQ Banks (2.1, June 1, 2019, ongoing updates)
- 2) the balancing adjustment (2.2, December 2020)
- 3) and the calculation of the ERQ (2.6, December 2027)

This is important work and FUDR will support and engage in the efforts of the Decree Parties and the Delaware River Basin Commission (DRBC) in any way we can. We understand that these are complicated and interrelated issues, and we look forward to working with you to find solutions which protect our interests in the Upper Delaware cold water ecosystem and the communities that rely on the economic benefits associated with this unique resource.

We have a concern with the proposed order for the studies. The Excess Release Quantity (ERQ) recalculation is last on the list to be finalized in 2029 but it may impact the outcomes of the other

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studies. We believe that an accurate recalculation of the ERQ would likely reveal a significant amount of additional water available to the river below the New York City Delaware basin reservoirs. Knowing the amount of water actually available is a cornerstones for the other study topics, and logically, that study should happen before the others.

When will study 2.2 Balancing Adjustment commence?

As a member of SEF, we urge RFAC to continue to engage this subcommittee in each of these studies so we may understand and make recommendations regarding the impacts on the aquatic and fishery resources.

Draft Salinity Study Statement

The use of the NYC Delaware basin reservoirs to repel the northward migration of the salt line from the Delaware Bay has impacts beyond keeping the salt front at bay. These releases provide additional water to the Upper Delaware River cold water ecosystem, often during hot and dry periods. If the reservoir releases were to be detached from the salt front, a new policy designed to mitigate the impacts to the Upper Delaware River would need to be put in place. FUDR would prefer that modest increases in baseline FFMP releases or a new Upper Delaware flow target be incorporated into the FFMP as a long-term solution to the needs of the upper river.

Thank you,



Jeff Skelding
Executive Director
Friends of the Upper Delaware River

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