

Presentation to the Delaware River Basin Commission, Regulated Flow Advisory Committee

The Upper Delaware River Business Coalition

Theresa Allen, UDRBC Co-Chair

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My name is Theresa Allen. I'm a lifelong resident of northeast PA, and business owner in the Town of Hancock, NY, for more than 25 years and the Co-Chair of the Upper Delaware River Business Coalition.

I wish to extend my appreciation for being invited today to speak before the DRBC Regulated Flow Advisory Committee.

The Upper Delaware River Business Coalition is a growing group of 55-plus local and regional businesses in New York and Pennsylvania who are often impacted by NYC Delaware basin reservoir management decisions that have impacts on the economic health of our region.

For those of you who may not be aware of this, the recreational economy of our region is now the most important source of commerce in our region and the health of the river is one of the most important drivers of the tourist economy.

In 2014, the Delaware County Department of Economic Development, the Town of Hancock, NY, the Upper Delaware Council, and Friends of the Upper Delaware River partnered on an economic analysis of the river that showed the cold water ecosystem on its own generates more than \$20,000,000 in annual revenues to the Upper Delaware River economy.

The impetus behind the formation of the coalition was the incident at Cannonsville Dam in July of this year where exploratory drilling for a hydro-electric facility pierced an aquifer at the base of the impoundment and created a turbid discharge into the river.

With regard to the accident at Cannonsville Dam, I want to express my appreciation for how NYC and the federal government responded to the incident. I believe it was handled in a very professional manner by making public safety the top priority.

While this incident sparked the formation of the coalition, it is one in a long series of management decisions over many decades that have impacted the business community below the dams. In every single case our coalition members and many other upper watershed stakeholders bear the brunt of these decisions and experience the impacts with absolutely no input or control over these decisions.

In the case of the dam accident, one of the priority response actions was to drain the Cannonsville reservoir as quickly as possible. While we understand that precautionary measures such as this one were necessary for public safety reasons, it also meant that an enormous amount of the cold water inventory in the reservoir was rapidly depleted leading to both short and long term consequences for

the recreational economy of the upper watershed. We also believe this had potential impacts on the downstream states in terms of their water resource needs.

Another example where reservoir management causes serious damage to the regional economy is the “yo-yo” effect on river flows that can occur when directed releases are abruptly shut off once the Montague target is achieved. Twice in the past couple of months the river was significantly dewatered due to a rapid shut off at Cannonsville dam. While previous speakers have mentioned the ecological impacts of these episodes, I can attest to how recreational visitors to our region, many of whom come from New Jersey, New York City, New York State, Pennsylvania, and Delaware will not come to our area if river flows are impaired. In this day of modern technology, people who enjoy the unique river-related recreational opportunities that area offers, activities such as fishing, hunting, boating, hiking, and birding only need to glance at their I-Phones to see what condition the river is in at any given moment. I can assure you that it is a very common occurrence for people to quickly decide to spend their hard earned money somewhere else if the river is in poor condition.

All of the things that have already been talked about today --- a thermal relief protocol, elimination of “yo-yo” releases, increased transparency in the FFMP negotiations, and improved baseline conservation flows are all supported by the Upper Delaware River Business Coalition. We recognize that our focus is the portion of the river just below the dams and that this committee must account for multiple stakeholder needs all the way to the Delaware Bay. While we recognize that our priorities are localized to the upper river, we believe that these policies can also benefit downstream states and will not harm New York City. We’re here today to ask that this committee and the Decree Party Principals do everything in their power to improve the FFMP by including these measures in the next agreement.

Thank you.