



St. Regis Mohawk Tribe



U.S. Department of Commerce  
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration



U.S. Department of the Interior  
Fish and Wildlife Service

August 20, 2007

Kimberly D. Bose, Secretary  
Federal Energy Regulatory Commission  
888 First Street, N.E., Room 1A  
Washington, DC 20426

Dear Ms. Bose:

As lead administrator for the St. Lawrence Environmental Trustee Council (SLETC), please accept this letter on behalf of the St. Regis Mohawk Tribe (SRMT), the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), and the Department of Interior (DOI) Fish and Wildlife Service, regarding the proposed **Massena-Grasse River Multipurpose Hydroelectric Project (FERC #12607) (the "MED Project")**.

The SLETC would like to reiterate our comments submitted in our letter dated April 5, 2007 and emphasize the Trustees' fiduciary obligation to pursue restoration of the natural resources in the vicinity of the release of hazardous materials in the lower Grasse River.

Actions of the FERC should not contravene the actions and obligations of the natural resource Trustees. As you consider the full environmental impact of the MED Project, FERC must avoid or mitigate any action that may hinder our ability to implement restoration projects within this river basin. Creation of the dam will alter natural movements of biota and sediment in the river, negatively affect important habitats including riffles and rapids, interfere with the natural free-flow of the river between Madrid and the mouth of the river, and has the potential to adversely affect numerous species of concern to the Trustees, including some of which are state listed species.

St. Lawrence Environment Trustee Council

The Trustees (SRMT; DOI/FWS; NOAA; NYSDEC) are currently working cooperatively with Alcoa and General Motors (collectively known as the "Companies") to resolve natural resource liability from three Massena facilities. Our goal, to protect and restore injured natural resources, encourages the selection of a permanent, effective remedy for the St. Lawrence Environment.

### Restoration

Federal, State and Tribal trust resources that have been injured by releases of hazardous material include but are not limited to, lands, sediment/benthos, flora and fauna, water, birds, reptiles, amphibians, fish, mammals and/or their associated habitats and services provided by these natural resources.

The Trustees and Companies have initiated efforts to identify candidate restoration projects for the St. Lawrence watershed including the Grasse River. Restoration projects must be designed to restore, enhance, create, and/or otherwise acquire the equivalent of injured resources and services. Public solicitations for projects addressing ecological services were collected and are currently being evaluated. The proposed MED Project conflicts with the Trustee's preference to restore the Grasse River on behalf of the public.

The Grasse River is designated as significant coastal habitat by New York State Department of State. Structures along the lower Grasse currently prohibit fish passage, including important target species such as lake sturgeon, walleye, salmon and American eel. Specifically, the Trustees are investigating the feasibility of fish passage on the Grasse River to allow access upstream of the Madrid Dam thereby creating more than fifty miles of unobstructed river extending from the mouth of the Grasse River to Lampson Falls between Degrasse and Russell. The MED Project may hinder the obligation of the Trustees to pursue all reasonable restoration options, including the passage of fish through this habitat.

### Study Recommendations

The Trustees support and recommend that, in addition to studies requested by their individual agencies or governments, FERC fully evaluate the impacts of the MED Project not just on current populations but also on anticipated restoration efforts (e.g., fish passage, habitat enhancement) in the Grasse River for lake sturgeon, eastern sand darter, American eel, salmon, walleye and freshwater mussels, including the yellow lampmussel.

Nia:wen/Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sken:nen/Peace,



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Barbara Tarbell, St. Regis Mohawk Tribe  
NRDA Administrative Coordinator

cc: Anne Secord, USFWS  
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