



# ULSTER COUNTY LEGISLATIVE NEWS

ULSTER COUNTY NEWS INFORMATION  
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
Contact: Fawn Tantillo (845) 340-3900

April 9, 2021

## **ULSTER COUNTY LEGISLATURE DELIVERS PUBLIC COMMENT TO FEDERAL ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION (FERC) ON PROPOSED ASHOKAN PUMP STORAGE PROJECT**

**Kingston, NY** – The Ulster County Legislature submitted a letter, signed by all 23 members, to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) as official Public Comment in the matter of Premium Energy Holdings LLC Preliminary Permit application for the Ashokan Pumped Storage Project.

In their letter the Legislature highlighted numerous concerns by residents, elected officials, environmental professionals and community stakeholders including: flooding of residential communities, damage to trout spawning areas, blockage of popular hiking trails, encroachments on “Forever Wild” lands and unknown and unexplored effects on underground aquifers and private wells. Chief among concerns was the lack of notice that a project was being proposed.

“Ulster County's mountain communities have understood and willingly participated in supplying the best water in the world to the best city in the world. We're proud of that legacy,” stated Legislator John Parete (D-Denning, Hardenburgh, Olive & Shandaken). “This proposal was floated because of our unique location and topography. From the beginning the plan was poorly thought out and poorly presented and most certainly lacked transparency.”

The letter was sent directly to FERC Director Vince Yearick, as well as the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation and New York City Department of Environmental Protection who issued their own opposition to the project on April 8 and requesting regulators deny the project.

The full letter from the Ulster County Legislature is appended to this release.

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# ULSTER COUNTY LEGISLATURE



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*Vice Chair 845-340-3900*

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*Minority Leader 845-340-3900*

VICTORIA A. FABELLA  
*Clerk 845-340-3666*

April 9, 2021

Federal Energy Regulatory Commission  
Attention: Vine Yearick, Director  
888 First Street, NE  
Washington, DC 20426

RE: P-15056 Premium Energy Holdings LLC Preliminary Permit application for the Ashokan Pumped Storage Project

Dear Director Yearick,

We, the below signed members of the Ulster County Legislature, hereby unanimously submit the following to be considered public comment in the matter of Premium Energy Holdings LLC Preliminary Permit application for the Ashokan Pumped Storage Project: P-15056.

Our commitment to sustainable, renewable power enterprises notwithstanding, projects of this nature should not, and cannot be initiated under a shroud of secrecy. We are appalled at the lack of transparency demonstrated thus far for a proposal of this size and scope located in one of New York State's most protected regions. For the past month we have received repeated protests from local and state officials and community stakeholders who were caught off guard and by surprise. Regrettably we must count ourselves among those who were blindsided by the existence of a permit application for a Pumped Storage Hydroelectric power system under and upstream of the Ashokan Reservoir.

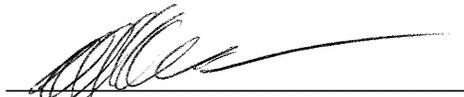
It is incumbent upon us as Ulster County elected representatives to make sure that there is no harm caused to our communities. Even under the best of circumstances this proposal will cause serious upheaval to residents and visitors alike. It's sad that Olive and the mountain communities have, for the last 100 years, worked with New York City to supply and protect one of the best water resources in the world. Now Ulster County communities, already stripped of 118,000 acres owned by NY City and another 250,000 owned by NYS, are once again being asked to cede more property both public and private.

The current proposal appears to raise more questions than answers. Each of the proposed sites for the new upper reservoir present numerous concerns and questions. A quick and cursory reading of the proposal point to the blocking of spawning areas of a number of trout fisheries, potential, if not assured flooding of residential communities and access points to popular hiking trails, and serious encroachments on constitutionally designated forever wild lands. Additionally, there are unknown effects on underground aquifers and private wells upon which hundreds Ulster County's rural residents depend, and question as to how will this plant effect the turbidity in the Ashokan and by consequence the Lower Esopus; an issue this body has been struggling to have adequately addressed for more than a decade?

We understand that this proposal is in its infancy and at a very preliminary point in the environmental review process. With that said, there has been an inexcusable lack of public notice and transparency. A project of this size and scope demands and deserves review and comment by elected representatives, residents, and community stakeholders. We take seriously our responsibility as the stewards of Ulster County's unique and amazing natural resources and will continue to advocate for their preservation and protection.

We appreciate your time.

Sincerely,



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David B. Donaldson, Chairman



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Tracey A. Bartels, Vice Chair



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Jonathan Heppner, Majority Leader



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Kenneth J. Ronk, Jr., Minority Leader



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Lynn Archer, District 21



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Albert Bruno, District 2



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Brian Cahill, District 4



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Thomas Corcoran, District 11



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Peter Criswell, District 7



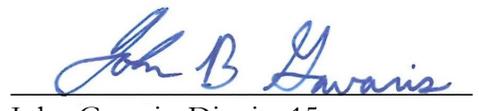
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James DeLaune, District 17



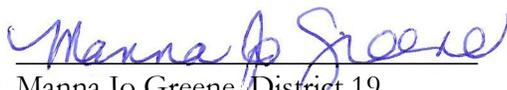
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Dean Fabiano, District 3



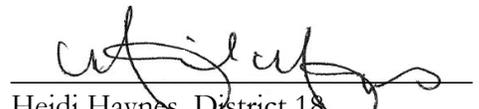
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John Gavaris, District 15



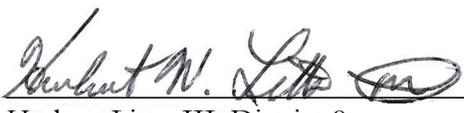
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Manna Jo Greene, District 19



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Heidi Haynes, District 18



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Herbert W. Litts, III, District 9

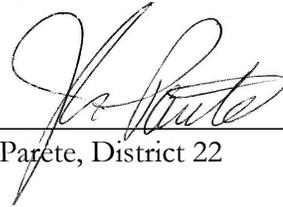


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Craig V. Lopez, District 14



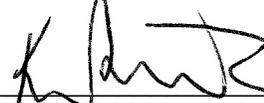
Mary Beth Maio, District 10



John Parete, District 22



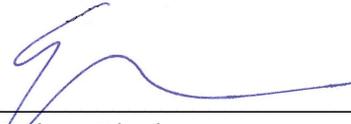
Laura Petit, District 8



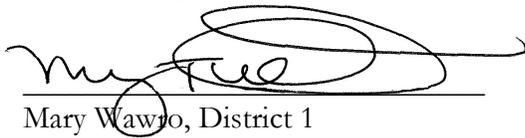
Kevin Roberts, District 12



Abe Uchitelle, District 5



Eve Walter, District 20



Mary Wawro, District 1

cc: Paul Rush, Deputy Commissioner – NYC DEP Bureau of Water Supply  
Kelly Turturro, Regional Director, NYS DEC, Region 3