



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION III
1650 Arch Street
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19103-2029

JAN 17 2013

Mr. John Dawes, Chair
Citizens Advisory Committee
to the Chesapeake Executive Council
P.O. Box 1981
Richmond, Virginia 23218

Dear Mr. Dawes:

Thank you for your December 17, 2012 letter regarding the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission's (FERC) relicensing of the Conowingo Hydroelectric Generating Station (CHGS). In your letter you have raised concerns that accumulated sediment needs to be managed, mitigated or removed as part of any control mechanism under FERC relicensing authority.

Exelon (the owner and operator of the CHGS and the Muddy Run Hydroelectric facilities) filed applications to relicense both Conowingo and Muddy Run facilities with FERC in August 2012. The relicensing of CHGS is considered a federal action under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Currently, FERC is reviewing the application and is anticipating issuing a Notice of Ready for Environmental Analysis (REA) in February 2013. After the REA comment period, FERC will prepare the environmental documentation in accordance with the NEPA process.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) monitors FERC's relicensing activities in the NEPA process, particularly if the federal action has the potential to significantly affect the quality of the environment. We have had conversations with FERC regarding its relicensing effort, and will stay engaged during the development of the associated environmental documentation. EPA recognizes that sediment is building behind the dam, and, as the recent USGS study indicates, the filling is occurring faster than expected reducing the trapping capacity. EPA and the Chesapeake Bay Program partners are assessing changes in the trapping capacity of the Conowingo and other dams in the watershed, as part of its Mid-point Assessment of the Chesapeake Bay TMDL.

If you have any questions regarding the NEPA program, please do not hesitate to contact Mr. Kevin Magerr in the Environmental Assessment and Innovation Division at (215) 814-5724 or Ms. Dianne McNally in the Water Protection Division at (215) 814-3297.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to read "Shawn M. Garvin", is positioned above the typed name.

Shawn M. Garvin
Regional Administrator

