

Hello friends, (please share widely)

I love this river. We love this river. Here is our chance to let our voices be heard to help free the West Branch of the Penobscot River.

The date and time of the Public Scoping meeting for the West Branch hydro relicensing's was announced August 11th. The Penobscot Mills project (5 dams), and the Ripogenous dam are all relicensing at once.

Virtual Scoping meetings will be held over the phone.

**General Public**---Sept 9<sup>th</sup>, Thursday 6:30pm to 8:30pm Phone---888 604 9359, code 899 8724

We need everyone we know, any beyond, to call into the **General Public** session that night.

“Free the West Branch”.

The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC), who will issue the license and determine all next steps, is conducting a public meeting to determine what the issues are surrounding the dams and to get it on record. These meetings really only happen once. The FERC has to give equal consideration to other uses of the river, besides hydroelectric generation. These uses can be recreational, cultural, fisheries and wildlife, and many more.

**History:** The state of Maine gave the West branch to Great Northern Paper (GNP) in the 1920's to help develop the Katahdin region, and the energy harvested from the GNP owned hydro-dams made the paper mills in Millinocket competitive on the world stage, until the early 2000's. GNP was the biggest employer in Penobscot County, and the second largest in Maine. They had very strong support in Augusta and there were no demands made for fish passage or other basic environmental issues. These dams were last relicensed in the 1990's in a very contentious battle between the resource agencies, the Penobscot Nation and GNP. Every politician in Augusta wrote comment letter to the FERC explaining the need to keep costs low for the GNP so that their business, and thousands of employees could continue to flourish. This meant no costly environmental measures. The resource agencies lost. The FERC was sued over the decision to de-water the West Branch so it could be re-routed into the mills. The FERC ruling was upheld in Federal court. (attached document) There is still no fish passage. Flows are regulated to the needs of the hydro project operators. The entire West branch ecosystem is adversely impacted by this group of dams and has been for 100 years.

The paper mills are gone. A foreign energy company (Brookfield) owns all of it. Energy goes into the grid, to the benefit of Brookfield. The power generated in the West Branch is no longer supporting an entire region. The power is just making profit for Brookfield.

However, the power generated by these projects is being made obsolete by the massive development of solar and wind generation in Maine, with plans for more revealed every day. We don't need the energy and the perpetual cost to the river's health and our health is too high. The dams need to be decommissioned and removed.

**The FERC needs to study decommissioning and removal as part of their analysis, based on the other uses of the river. The other uses are more important than the energy produced.**

This 2-hour hidden meeting is nearly the only chance for voices to be heard and recorded on record. Here is a chance for people to get fired up and tell the FERC they want their river back. They want clean water back and they want their culture back. Here is a chance for people to get really fired up and to let it be known that the West Branch of the Penobscot does not belong to a Canadian company. Here is the chance for the FERC to do the right thing and give the river back to the Penobscot Nation and the people of Maine and the USA. Fish ways will not cure the river's issues. Only decommissioning and removal.

Free the West Branch. Here is the chance to make a difference. At the public Scoping meeting for the West Enfield dam a few years ago, not one person was there to speak up for the river. That told the FERC that clearly that no one cared. I hope people can let the FERC know on Sept 9<sup>th</sup> that the river is sacred to them, and the West Branch must run free again.

Please join me in this noble and honorable quest.

Sincerely,

Dan

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