



Conowingo MDE -MDE- <conowingo.mde@maryland.gov>

In Support of a New Long-Term License for Conowingo Dam

1 message

Tue, Jul 18, 2023 at 8:34 AM

[REDACTED]
to: conowingo.mde@maryland.gov

Dear Maryland Secretary of the Environment Serena McIlwain,

Dear Secretary McIlwain,

As you consider issuing a new water quality certification to secure a long term license for the Conowingo Dam, I'm reaching out today to share my perspective on the importance of the dam in achieving Maryland's clean energy goals and for restoring the Chesapeake Bay.

The Conowingo Dam has been operating for the past 95 years and it remains one of the nation's largest non-federal hydropower projects and the largest source of renewable energy in the State of Maryland.

The dam's continued operation is critical to achieving Governor Wes Moore's goal of generating 100 percent clean energy in Maryland by 2035. Each year, the dam produces enough clean, renewable energy to power approximately 165,000 homes while avoiding 867,000 metric tons of carbon emissions—the equivalent of removing roughly 190,000 cars from the road annually. Importantly, the dam also has the flexibility to generate clean power after sunset and without wind.

As Governor Wes Moore has noted, the economy and environment don't have to be at odds. The dam benefits both supporting 365,350 recreation visits each year and 265 full-time jobs, totaling \$273 million in annual economic benefits to Maryland.

Like all who value the Chesapeake Bay, I am concerned about our water quality. However, efforts to blame the dam are misplaced. The Conowingo Dam does not produce pollution. In fact, the dam traps harmful pollutants that flow downstream from Pennsylvania and New York. If the dam didn't exist, that upstream pollution and debris would flow into the Bay. Baltimore's Constellation Energy, which operates the dam, removes more than 600 tons of upstream debris annually and is committed to doing its part to keep the Bay healthy. As part of its historic 2019 settlement with the state, Constellation committed \$700 million over the duration of a 50-year license to protect the Susquehanna River, and the Chesapeake Bay—more than any other private entity in the 27,500 square-mile watershed.

The Conowingo Dam should not shoulder the responsibility of cleaning the pollution and debris created by other sources. Instead, all parties must come together to address the true causes of pollution in the watershed. I hope you will find a balanced path forward that secures a new long-term license for the Conowingo Dam and preserves the Chesapeake Bay for generations to come.

Thank you for your consideration.

Regards,

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