

North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality

Release: Immediate
Date: Oct. 23, 2015

Contact: Jamie Kritzer
Phone: 919-707-8602 (work); 919-218-5935 (cell)

State water quality certification issued to Alcoa Power Generating Inc.

RALEIGH – The N.C. Division of Water Resources has approved the water quality certification requested by Alcoa Power Generating Inc., or APGI, for continued operation of the hydroelectric dams at High Rock, Tuckertown, Narrows and Falls reservoirs on the Yadkin River.

The water quality certification is required as part of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission's relicensing process for a new, 50-year hydroelectric dam operating license. The federal energy commission must decide whether to grant the company a new license for operation of the hydroelectric dams. The dams are in Davie, Davidson, Rowan, Montgomery and Stanly counties.

The water quality certification requires APGI to install devices to increase the water's levels of dissolved oxygen, which fish and other aquatic life need to breathe. The company is also required to monitor the water to ensure those levels are meeting state water quality standards for dissolved oxygen. Monitoring conducted in the past revealed that dissolved oxygen levels did not always meet state water quality standards.

The water quality certification also includes:

- A requirement that APGI develop a sedimentation and flood protection plan for Salisbury's raw water intake and pump station. APGI also will be required to provide continual sediment removal at the raw water intake to maintain it in operable condition.
- Annual water quality monitoring of the discharges from the four lakes for pollutants.
- Required monitoring of sediment from the Alcoa Badin Works Plant site to the Narrows dam for heavy metals, polychlorinated biphenyls and poly-aromatic hydrocarbons to ensure that the operation does not cause the contaminants to be carried downstream.
- A clause to allow the state to modify its existing certification if water quality-related problems develop as a result of the operation of the dams. This gives the state the ability to include additional water quality requirements in the certification prior to recertification.
- A surety bond that guarantees financial resources are available to make the improvements required in the water quality certification. Those requirements include improving dissolved oxygen levels in the discharges and performing the required dissolved oxygen monitoring.
- Portions of the 2007 Relicensing Settlement Agreement relevant to water quality, including a plan to monitor and regulate reservoir levels.

This certification does not make any determination regarding the ownership of submerged lands or any property associated with the Yadkin Project.

The water quality certification approval letter can be found online at:

<http://its.enr.state.nc.us/Weblink8/0/doc/316138/Page1.aspx>.

The hearing officer's report and entire application file can be found online at:

<http://its.enr.state.nc.us/Weblink8/0/fol/169386/Row1.aspx>.

###

Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/ncdenr>
1601 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, NC 27699-1601

RSS feed: <http://portal.ncdenr.org/web/opa/news-releases-rss>

Twitter: <http://twitter.com/NCDENR>