



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

Please Protect Maryland by Holding Constellation Accountable with Conowingo Dam

1 message

Samuel Gold <[REDACTED]>

Sun, Jul 30, 2023 at 1:34 PM

Reply-To: [REDACTED]

To: Danielle Spendiff <conowingo.mde@maryland.gov>

Dear MDE Regulatory and Customer Service Division Chief Danielle Spendiff,

As a lifetime Maryland resident and lover of the Chesapeake Bay, the surrounding region, and the residents of the watershed, I implore the state of Maryland and the Maryland Department of the Environment to mitigate damages to the Chesapeake Bay associated with the Conowingo Dam.

The Conowingo dam is not only a valuable power generation source (preventing 880,000 tons of greenhouse gas emissions annually; <https://www.constellationenergy.com/our-company/locations/location-sites/conowingo-hydroelectric-generating-station.html>), it also has historically contributed significantly to preventing pollutants from reaching the Bay downstream. The dam's reservoirs for pollution collection have reached capacity, however, so intense weather events force massive amounts of pollution out of the reservoirs, then downstream into the Bay system (<https://www.cardin.senate.gov/press-releases/maryland-congressional-delegation-urges-focus-on-environmental-protection-as-state-negotiates-new-conowingo-dam-license/>). Constellation stands to profit significantly from the hydroelectric energy generation of the dam and can allocate a portion of profits towards upstream pollution mitigation efforts to continue having a positive impact on the Bay system despite the reservoirs reaching capacity for pollution collection (<https://www.cbf.org/document-library/non-cbf-documents/economic-analysis-of-the-conowingo-hydroelectric-generating-stations-public.pdf>).

The settled waiver of the 2018 Water Quality Certification between Maryland and Constellation as part of the FERC licensing agreement that was recently vacated (<https://www.cbf.org/news-media/newsroom/2022/maryland/court-of-appeals-vacates-marylands-conowingo-dam-license-offering-new-chance-for-chesapeake-bay-protections.html>) allows a licensing correction which will have immense implications to the Chesapeake Bay and all those who rely on it for decades to come. Now is the time for Maryland and the Maryland Department of the Environment to implement stringent standards, mitigation efforts, and environmental rehabilitation requirements to Constellation as part of the licensing process desired by the energy generator.

Like the letter urging environmental protections as part of the new licensing agreement written by Maryland representatives (<https://www.cardin.senate.gov/press-releases/maryland-congressional-delegation-urges-focus-on-environmental-protection-as-state-negotiates-new-conowingo-dam-license/>), voices of residents like me in agreement should be considered as additional support. The Chesapeake Bay is an invaluable resource and an internationally recognized treasure to be protected by Maryland, other Chesapeake Bay Watershed states, and the national government. Padding the bottom line of Constellation should not be a priority of Maryland or the Maryland Department of the Environment, especially when significant harms stand to occur as a result of lax regulations that are part of a decades-long license granted to the energy generation giant.

In order to continue progress towards achieving the goals set forth in the Chesapeake Clean Water Blueprint ("Blueprint"), a portion of Constellation's profits from use of the Conowingo Dam should be used for upstream pollution mitigation as this will have a large impact on health of the Bay and attaining progress milestones of the Blueprint (<https://www.nab.usace.army.mil/Media/News-Releases/Article/684352/final-report-released-analyzing-sediment-and-pollution-flow-impacts-to-chesapeake/>). The Chesapeake Bay Watershed states are already struggling to meet the goals set forth in the Blueprint, so the additional burden of pollution mitigation using public funds instead of Constellation profits would set back Blueprint progress even further. Any greater accountability to which Maryland holds Constellation will benefit the public more than associated drawbacks potentially cited by Constellation (<https://www.cbf.org/issues/polluted-runoff/conowingo-dam.html>), so again, I urge Maryland and the Maryland Department of the Environment to require Constellation to implement practices that extensively protect the environment and fund pollution mitigation efforts to offset damages stemming from the continued operation of Conowingo Dam.

Please protect Maryland by holding Constellation accountable.

8/2/23, 10:12 AM

State of Maryland Mail - Please Protect Maryland by Holding Constellation Accountable with Conowingo Dam

Sincerely,
Samuel Gold