

United States Senate

September 19, 2022

Kimberly D. Bose, Secretary
Debbie-Anne Reese, Deputy Secretary
Federal Energy Regulatory Commission
888 First Street, NE
Washington, DC 20426

Dear Secretary Bose and Deputy Secretary Reese,

I write in support of the application filed by the Northern Indiana Public Service Company (NIPSCO) on FERC Docket No. 12514 for Non-Capacity Related Amendment of License and Request for Expedited Approval for Norway-Oakdale Hydroelectric Project. This amendment would represent the end a long and arduous process that has touched multiple agencies, local businesses, and homeowners over the past decade. Should this application be approved, it will strike a healthy balance between local economic concerns and the health and safety of endangered mussels downstream of the Oakdale Dam.

Having visited the lake and spoken with business owners, local elected officials, state officials, and homeowners, I know how important this issue is to residents of the City of Monticello and Carroll and White counties. Lake Freeman is both a driver of economic growth and strength and a recreational tool to families who have planted roots in the area. An economic impact study conducted by the Carroll and White County Economic Development Corporations found that the lake level fluctuations negatively impacted the local economy across 25 different industries over the course of multiple peak season interruptions. Addressing the lake level issue will ensure the safety of boaters, lake wildlife, lake businesses, the broader economy, and the endangered mussels downstream for decades to come.

Local landowners, businesses, the Shafer and Freeman Lakes Environmental Conservation Corporation (SFLECC), and elected officials have been seeking reprieve from the current policy from US Fish and Wildlife (USFWS), Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC), and Northern Indiana Public Service Company (NISPCO) for a decade over this issue. Following the meeting I convened at Lake Freeman and conversations I had with USFWS I was pleased to learn that a series of cooperative conversations took place between private and government stakeholders during the summer months. Eventually, those conversations resulted in the amendment submitted to the commission which is under consideration. I have been assured by community leaders that the flow rates in the proposed amendment will greatly improve the certainty of lake operations going forward and strike an even balance between the needs and long-term prospects of the community and the protections provided to animals on the Endangered Species Act. I am honored to have played a role in these groups coming to a consensus and appreciate all sides agreeing to navigate difficult conversations for the greater good.

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Lastly, I would like to thank Commission staff for assisting me and my team in understanding an issue as complex as we have at Lake Freeman. On a number of occasions through the process, multiple stakeholders commented on how this is truly a unique set of circumstances involving two federal agencies, a regulated utility, the ESA, the court system, and local voices. Commission staff were able to help untangle the issue in a way that allowed me and my team to play a productive role

Please make every fair and reasonable consideration for this application filed by NIPSCO for approval of a Non-capacity Related Amendment of License approved by FERC. My office stands ready to be of assistance until a proper resolution has been agreed and finalized.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Mike Braun". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

United States Senator