
House Passes Murphy's Collinsville Dams Legislation

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June 16, 2010

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WASHINGTON, D.C. - With approval by the U.S. House of Representatives today of legislation authored by Congressman Chris Murphy (CT-5) to allow local control of two hydropower dams, the town of Canton, in cooperation with Avon and Burlington, is one step closer to generating its own power. Murphy and Canton First Selectman Dick Barlow have been pushing for town operation of the Collinsville dams as municipalities, states, and the federal government looks for ways to provide cleaner, domestic power sources to consumers. These dams, once retrofitted, are expected to produce about two Megawatts of power, enough to power more than 1,500 homes.

"Bringing these two dormant dams back in service makes sense for Canton and the surrounding communities, and this project could become a shining example for the rest of the state and country as we look for cleaner ways to power our homes and businesses," said Murphy.

The two Collinsville dams (upper and lower) were built in the 18th and 19th centuries to power the Collins Company, which closed in the 1960s. While the dams are now owned by the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), operating licenses are issued by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC). Federal legislation will provide the town with the right to operate the dams by allowing for the reinstatement of existing (but inactive) FERC licenses.

The legislation would also require the FERC to solicit additional public comment and new environmental data before taking any action, ensuring that the river's health and ecology is fully protected. The state legislature has also passed legislation allowing Canton to operate the state-owned dams.

"I'm extremely gratified with Chris' efforts on behalf of the project for Canton, Avon and Burlington. We are very excited, and are now well on our way to moving forward with the project," said Canton First Selectman Dick Barlow.

The bill must next be passed by the U.S. Senate and signed by President Obama before the town can take over the licenses.

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