

Public Input on General Electric's September 16, 2022  
Water Withdrawal and Uses Plan

December 2022

**From:** [Iott, Traci](#)  
**To:** [R1Housatonic](#)  
**Cc:** [Papp, Carol](#); [Peterson, Susan \(DEEP-WPLR\)](#); [graham.stevens.ct.gov](#)  
**Subject:** CTDEEP Comments on Water Withdrawal and Climate Adaptation Plans  
**Date:** Monday, December 19, 2022 9:19:37 AM

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Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Water Withdrawal and Uses Plan and the Sustainability and Climate Adaptation Plan for the Rest of River. These are important efforts to provide for a holistic approach to addressing the impact of PCBs on water quality and uses of the Housatonic River resources in both Connecticut and Massachusetts. As currently drafted, however, these plans fail to conduct any assessments within the portion of the river in Connecticut, having suggested that these evaluations pertain only to the areas where active remediation is being conducted.

The permit which established the requirements for submittal of these scopes of work does not place any restrictions or limitation on the area subject to these studies. They are not limited to areas where active remediation is to be conducted. Both climate change and water withdrawal are of concern in Connecticut. Climate change and the resulting change in environmental conditions will likely affect the downstream transport of PCBs into Connecticut, making this a key issue for our State. Similarly, Connecticut has several permitted water withdrawals from the Housatonic River within the Rest of River area, including a major withdrawal to support Candlewood Lake, which are and will be affected by PCBs from General Electric. These topics must to be evaluated and addressed within Connecticut to assure the attainment of the environmental goals for the Housatonic River, consistent with the permit and other appropriate state regulations.

CTDEEP requests that General Electric be required to revise these plans to include analysis of impacts within Connecticut and development of mitigation strategies as appropriate.

Traci

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**CITY OF PITTSFIELD**

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT, CITY HALL, 70 ALLEN STREET, RM 205, PITTSFIELD, MA 01201

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MEMORANDUM

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To: Dean Tagliaferro, EPA Project Manager Housatonic Site  
From: James McGrath, Park, Open Space, and Natural Resource Program Manager  
Date: December 7, 2022  
Subject: *Comments on GE-Pittsfield/Housatonic River Water Withdrawal and Uses Plan*

The City of Pittsfield has reviewed the document referenced above and - working with Skeo under a Technical Assistance Services for Communities (TASC) arrangement with EPA - we offer the following comments:

As stated within the *Plan*, careful consideration of sequence and timing of remediation activities is an approach to achieve the conservation goals for important habitat found in the river corridor. In furtherance of this goal, the City feels it is important to time water withdrawals to minimize any withdrawal during seasonal low-flow conditions which could exacerbate impacts to sensitive habitats and exacerbate impacts to important life cycles of protected species. The USFWS and MassDEP's Division of Fisheries and Wildlife can provide guidance with respect to mitigating impacts.

We also offer the following general comments:

- proposed water withdrawal activities should be designed to minimize any contribution to downstream water quality impairment conditions.
- definitive confirmation of groundwater supply systems located in close proximity to the river that may be impacted by the proposed water withdrawals should be undertaken.
- water users should be proactively notified of pending water withdrawals through an alert system when their intake is to be affected, and when their water resource is returned.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide comments on plans and studies associated with the Rest of River clean up and are grateful for the technical assistance provided by Skeo through EPA.



## HOUSATONIC REST OF RIVER MUNICIPAL COMMITTEE

December 19, 2022

Dean Tagliaferro, EPA Project Manager  
GE-Pittsfield/Housatonic River Site  
Boston, MA  
Submitted via email to [R1Housatonic@epa.gov](mailto:R1Housatonic@epa.gov)

Re: Comments on the *Water Withdrawal and Uses Plan*

Dear Mr. Tagliaferro:

The Housatonic Rest of River Municipal Committee (the Committee) respectfully submits the following comments on the *Water Withdrawal and Uses Plan* (hereafter referred to as the Plan).

The Committee wishes to express its ongoing concern that this plan, like many previous documents, does not provide the level of detail needed at this stage in the planning phase. The Plan, and other, outline work that is proposed during the Conceptual Design phase of the cleanup. As commitments are made within each successive plan, the Committee is concerned that it is becoming increasingly difficult to track the commitments to ensure that they are met. The Committee strongly encourages EPA to require that GE compile and maintain a list of future actions that it have been proposed in the various work plans and that EPA has required as part of the approval process. Such a list should be updated by GE after each plan submittal and each conditional approval letter is issued. The list should be maintained on EPA's Housatonic River Cleanup website for public access. Maintaining this list will be of critical to aid all parties participating in the review of the cleanup process, including impacted landowners, businesses, the public, municipal officials, state agency staff and EPA.

The Committee's full comments on the *Water Withdrawal and Uses Plan* are enclosed as Attachment A.

Sincerely,  
The Housatonic Rest of River Municipal Committee

Enclosure: Attachment A - Housatonic Rest of River Municipal Committee Comments on the Water Withdrawal and Uses Plan

Enclosure: Attachment B - Technical Assistance Services for Communities GE-Pittsfield/Housatonic River Site Comments on Water Withdrawal and Uses Plan October 27, 2022

ATTACHMENT A  
HOUSATONIC REST OF RIVER MUNICIPAL COMMITTEE  
Comments on the *Water Withdrawal and Uses Plan*  
GE/Housatonic River - Rest of River

In general, the *Water Withdrawal and Uses Plan* (hereafter referred to as the Plan) provides an adequate approach for the identification of river water withdrawals and potentially impacted river water users. However, there are additional potential river users that may be impacted, and will need to be identified for thoroughness (i.e., groundwater users, flow requirements, irrigation ditches). The Plan does not thoroughly discuss requirements associated with these uses that may be affected by implementation of Corrective Measures, and focuses more on the compilation of data and future activities that will be conducted during the RD/RA. GE should provide additional information about compliance with Applicable or Relevant and Appropriate Requirements (ARARs) and potential impacts to impairment of the river. Lastly, the Plan does not describe a contingency plan for river users that do not want to communicate with GE.

Pushing off identification and conducting impact analyses to a later date is a poor strategy. Impacts along the full Reaches 5-9 corridor should be considered before final work and proposals are made in PDI/Conceptual Designs for Reach 5A, because work conducted in this upper reach can potentially impact water users far downstream. These impacts need to be identified and mitigation measures proposed before designs for Reach 5A can properly be finalized and reviewed for approval. For example, Onyx Specialty Papers uses river water for its processes and demands water of high quality, and resuspension of sediment from Reach 5A remediation could impact its business. Waiting to engage with the landowner until the PDI phase of design for Reaches 6 or 7 may be too late.

The Plan should identify users of both surface and groundwaters rather than postponing such activities for a future plan. Most of the larger commercial and industrial users are already known, and GE should immediately begin to engage these users to understand their water quality and water quantity needs. This plan does not indicate if GE has even begun to contact these and other potentially impacted users. Publishing this list as soon as possible will allow local, state and federal stakeholders to fill in gaps. The Committee at this time wishes to express its strong concern that water levels and water quality are protected for important water users such as Onyx Specialty Papers, and the Glendale Hydroelectric Project

The Plan does not provide detail about the potential impacts that water users will face during the cleanup process. EPA should require that the Plan be revised to address several gaps that have been identified as detailed in the following comments:

1. The Plan should include proposed activities to identify users all along the Rest of River corridor who may be impacted, not just for Reaches 5-8. At a minimum users should be identified through Reach 9, the lower reaches of which include agricultural activities and may include other residential, commercial and industrial users.

2. The Plan states that GE will contact MassDEP to identify users who withdraw 100,000 gpd or more of groundwater. While identifying large commercial users is important, it may also be important to identify smaller users, particularly if there are a number of them that could cumulatively withdraw significant amounts of water within a small geographic length of river.
3. The Plan does not include any reference of potential drought conditions. GE should include proposed activities to identify potential impacts of drought conditions and what mitigation or contingency measures could be proposed to accommodate water needs under such circumstances.
4. The Plan describes how all industrial, commercial, private, or other withdrawals and/or uses of water from the Rest of River will be identified to minimize/mitigate impacts during implementation of the Remedial Action. However, the Plan does not mention how the proposed water withdrawals will be evaluated to determine their compliance with the ARARs identified in the Revised Final Permit. As stated within the Plan, water withdrawals may be timed to minimize impact to important life cycles of protected species. GE should also time water withdrawals to minimize any withdrawal during seasonal low flow conditions which could exacerbate impacts to sensitive habitats.

GE should evaluate the proposed water withdrawal projects to ensure protection of important species and habitats. GE should work with the appropriate state and federal agencies to determine if decreases to instream flows would impact endangered species and their habitats and/or vernal pools or core habitat areas. There may be minimum instream flow requirements for species of concern. In addition, the MA Division of Ecological Restoration has provided guidance about important minimum instream flows.

5. The Plan does not identify any water users that 'release' water to the Rest of River area. This is a very important concern since water dischargers are releasing water under the National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) program that requires and allows for reliance on receiving system dilution or attenuation. In addition, these point discharges are a source of water that GE will need to manage during Rest of River remedy activities. In the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, EPA is the permitting authority and NPDES permits are typically co-issued by EPA and MassDEP. NPDES permits regulate wastewater discharges by limiting the quantities of pollutants to be discharged and imposing monitoring requirements and other conditions. There are two areas of concern related to this issue including: 1) the impact to the permissible point release conditions which may rely on receiving system dilution or attenuation, and 2) the impact of the released water to the Housatonic River during remedial action activities.

Municipal Wastewater Treatment Plants (WWTPs) in the Housatonic River watershed are being required by the EPA to reduce concentrations of phosphorus in their wastewater discharges. Both the Pittsfield and Lenox WWTPs must invest many millions of dollars to

upgrade their treatment plants to comply with this requirement, and GE will need to identify measures that will ensure they continue to meet their permit requirements.

GE should address the potential impacts to municipal water users and others that release water through the NPDES program.

6. The Plan does not clearly describe the anticipated water withdrawal rates (such as cubic feet per second (cfs) or percentages of the entire river flow) that are required to achieve the ROR remedy requirements. It is important to acknowledge the need to maintain certain instream flows for downstream municipal supply uses.

GE should manage the water withdrawal activities in order to maintain minimum instream flow requirements for municipal supply demands.

7. Review of the Housatonic River water quality management plans (MassDEP-DWM, 2007) indicates that segments of the river are impaired with low dissolved oxygen concentrations, elevated nutrient concentrations and the presence of invasive macrophytes. The proposed water withdrawal activities may adversely affect or compound these existing impairment conditions. The Plan does not indicate how the proposed water withdrawal activities will be controlled to minimize contribution to existing impairment issues.

GE should design the proposed water withdrawal activities to minimize any contribution to downstream water quality impairment conditions.

8. The Plan recognizes the need to inventory direct point source intakes from the Housatonic River. However, it may also be important to identify any groundwater use (nonpoint or indirect intake sources). Groundwater well fields are common potable supply systems that can tap into river alluvial resource areas as their primary groundwater source. Groundwater uses are an important consideration for the Plan's inventory as the interruption of a surface water supply may impact a groundwater resource relied upon for domestic or agricultural use.

GE should include within the inventory groundwater supply systems located in close proximity to the river that may be impacted by the proposed water withdrawals.

9. The Plan indicates that a variety of methods will be used to identify potential water users along the ROR. This section includes the use of aerial photographs and in-field real-time inventories as possible resources.

GE should review aerials over larger areas adjacent to the river in order to identify existing, active agricultural ditch systems that may not be observable immediately adjacent to the riverbank (aerials of densely vegetated riverbank areas may mask the occurrence of a ditch intake).



10. The Plan explains the methods that will be used to develop a database of water users that will help track and identify users that need to be forewarned of pending ROR remedy action. GE should offer to include these entities in an “email or phone call alert” notification system that actively alerts these entities when their intake is to be affected, and when their water resource is returned. These active communication alerts will likely be a valuable outreach to the community.

EPA should work with GE to facilitate the creation of a water users electronic alert notification system in order to proactively notify water users of withdrawals and water returns. It is critical that the community be informed and have both regular and easy access to information as it becomes available.

11. The Plan describes the proposed schedule for performing the water withdrawal and uses evaluation. The Plan should outline a contingency plan to be utilized in the event that a documented water user is unresponsive to notices regarding pending water use. In addition, the Plan should acknowledge that the “specific minimization/mitigation measures that will be implemented for water withdrawals and uses during remedial activities” will be one of the earliest steps outlined in the Final RD/RA Work Plans for each Remediation Unit. It should be acknowledged that notification of water withdrawals to water users will be an important early step in remedial action efforts.

GE should describe a contingency plan to notify absent water users who may be unaware of pending water withdrawals, and to acknowledge that notification of water users is an important initial step in remedial action efforts.



# Technical Assistance Services *for* Communities GE-Pittsfield/Housatonic River Site Comments on Water Withdrawal and Uses Plan October 27, 2022

**Contract No.:** 68HERH21A0018

**Call Order Number:** 68HERH22F0082 (14.0.0 OSRTI – Regional & Headquarters  
TASC/CI Support)

**Technical Direction:** R1 2.6.14 GE Pittsfield

## **Technical Assistance Services for Communities (TASC) Comments on GE-Pittsfield/Housatonic River Site – Water Withdrawal and Uses Plan, September 2022**

### **Introduction**

This document provides TASC comments on the GE-Pittsfield/Housatonic River – Water Withdrawal and Uses Plan. This document is for the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission (BRPC) and municipalities to use as they develop comments to share with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). TASC does not make comments directly to EPA on behalf of communities. This document is funded by EPA’s TASC program. The contents do not necessarily reflect the policies, actions or positions of EPA.

Pursuant to the Revised Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) Permit Modification (Revised Final Permit) issued by EPA to the General Electric Company (GE) on December 16, 2020, for the Rest of River (ROR) portion of the GE-Pittsfield/Housatonic River site, GE is required to minimize/mitigate impacts during implementation of the Remedial Action to withdrawals and/or uses of water from the ROR by any entity. The Water Withdrawal and Uses Plan provides details regarding achievement of the applicable Performance Standard and requirements of the Revised Final Permit. The Revised Final Permit says that the Performance Standard will be achieved by: (1) identifying all industrial, commercial, private or other withdrawals and/or uses of water from the ROR; (2) identifying requirements associated with those uses (including water quality and quantity) that may be affected by implementation of the Remedial Action; and (3) proposing methods to minimize/mitigate impacts (to those withdrawals and/or uses) during implementation of the Remedial Action.

## Summary

The September 2022 Water Withdrawal and Uses Plan (the Plan) has five sections:

- Introduction
- Pre-Design Activities
- Design Evaluations and Process
- Schedule
- References

The Plan describes proposed activities to identify industrial, commercial, private or other withdrawals and uses of water from the portions of the Housatonic River that will be subject to remediation activities (i.e., Reaches 5 through 8), as well as to determine requirements associated with these uses (e.g., water quality and quantity) that may be affected by implementation of the Remedial Action. In addition, the Plan includes the following:

- A description of information to be gathered for each identified river water user;
- A description of the evaluation to be performed to assess potential impacts that may occur to the water withdrawals and uses during remedial activities;
- A description of the design process to minimize and mitigate impacts, if any, to identify river water withdrawals and users impacted during implementation of the remedial activities;
- A description of documents to be prepared to summarize the river water withdrawal and usage details and the evaluation and design of any mitigative measures; and
- A schedule for performing the water withdrawal and uses evaluation.

Results of the pre-design activities to identify the river water users that could potentially be affected by the remediation in a given Remediation Unit will be summarized in a water withdrawal and uses evaluation that will be included in the Conceptual Remedial Design/Remedial Action (RD/RA) Work Plan for each respective Remediation Unit. During preparation of the Conceptual RD/RA Work Plan for each Remediation Unit, potential impacts to the identified river water withdrawals and uses within or downstream of that Remediation Unit that could be affected by remediation will be evaluated. Considerations that will be evaluated during this assessment will include:

- Location of each intake relative to the footprint where remedial actions will be conducted;
- Equipment, materials and layout of the water intake;
- Type of upstream or nearby remedial action (e.g., removal, backfilling or capping);
- Estimated effects of such remedial action on the river water (e.g., due to resuspension of sediments, runoff from banks or floodplains, other impacts on water quality, changes in water quantity, etc.);
- Need for withdrawal water during the remediation period; and
- Water quality and quantity requirements associated with the use.

As part of the Final RD/RA Work Plan for each Remediation Unit, GE will evaluate and identify appropriate measures to minimize and/or mitigate impacts, if any, to the identified river water withdrawals and uses that could be affected by implementation of the remedial activities in the subject Remediation Unit. The specific minimization/mitigative measures that will be considered will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis and will depend on the type, size, use and location of any river water withdrawals, as well as the final remedial activities, schedule and extents and the estimated impact (if any) of such activities on the water withdrawal and use. Examples of such measures that will be considered, as appropriate, include but are not limited to monitoring water quality, identifying an alternative water source, relocating the water intake, constructing a barrier around the water intake, adjusting the water withdrawal frequency, temporarily suspending the water withdrawal, and/or incorporating water treatment (e.g., filtration).

### **TASC Comments**

TASC reviewed the Plan and compared it to the expectations in the GE's Final Revised Rest of River Statement of Work and applicable elements of the Revised Final Permit. The Statement of Work, which specifies the deliverables and activities that GE will conduct to design and implement the ROR Remedial Action, states that the Water Withdrawal and Uses Plan will describe proposed pre-design activities to identify industrial, commercial, private or other withdrawals and uses of water along the portions of the Housatonic River that will be subject to remediation activities as well as to determine requirements associated with these uses that may be affected by implementation of Corrective Measures.

The Plan seems to provide a fairly adequate approach for the identification of river water withdrawals and potentially impacted river water users. TASC comments, below, identify some additional potential river users that may be impacted, and will need to be identified for thoroughness (i.e., groundwater users, flow requirements, irrigation ditches). The Plan does not thoroughly discuss requirements associated with these uses that may be affected by implementation of Corrective Measures, and focuses more on the compilation of data and future activities that will be conducted during the RD/RA. Community members may be interested in additional information about compliance with Applicable or Relevant and Appropriate Requirements (ARARs) and potential impacts to impairment of the river may be important to include. Lastly, the Plan does not describe a contingency plan for river users that do not want to communicate with GE. TASC observations are described in more detail below.

1. The Water Withdrawal and Uses Plan describes how the evaluation will “identify all industrial, commercial, private, or other withdrawals and/or uses of water from the Rest of River” to minimize/mitigate impacts during implementation of the Remedial Action to withdrawals and/or uses of water from the ROR by any entity. The Plan does not mention how the proposed water withdrawals will be evaluated to determine their compliance with the ARARs identified in the Revised Final Permit.

Water withdrawal may affect the ecological resources within and adjacent to the river. The protection of ROR ecological integrity is captured by the ARARs included in Appendix C of the Revised Final Permit. The ARARs include the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act (16 U.S.C. 662 et seq.), the Massachusetts Clean Water Act – Water

Quality Certification (314 CMR 9.00 et seq., including 9.06 – 9.07), the Massachusetts Endangered Species Act ([MESA] and Regulations MGL c. 131A 321 CMR 10.00, Parts I, II and V: 321 CMR 10.00, Part IV), and others (for instance the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act and Regulations: MGL c. 131, Section 40, 310 CMR 10.00, including 10.53). It seems important to communicate the proposed water withdrawals to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection – Division of Fisheries and Wildlife (MassDEP-DF&W) to determine if decreases to instream flows would impact:

- Federal or state threatened or endangered species of aquatic life or terrestrial life (and their habitats), or
- Vernal pools or core habitat areas.

The Revised Final Permit contains an acknowledgement of cooperative coordination of ROR remedy approaches with the MassDEP-DF&W (Attachment B to the Permit, pdf page 102). As stated within the Plan, careful consideration of sequence and timing of remediation activities is an approach to achieve the conservation goals for the important habitats. Water withdrawals may be timed appropriately to minimize impact to important life cycles of protected species. In addition, TASC recommends timing water withdrawals to minimize any withdrawal during seasonal low flow conditions which could exacerbate impacts to sensitive habitats (for instance Core Areas and vernal pools).

TASC also recommends that appropriate resource agencies evaluate the proposed water withdrawal projects to ensure protection of important species and habitats. There may be minimum instream flow requirements for species of concern. In addition, the MassDEP, Department of Ecological Restoration has provided guidance about important minimum instream flows (see Reference List).

*The community may want to ask EPA if the USFWS and MassDEP's Division of Fisheries and Wildlife (and Division of Ecological Restoration if appropriate) have been or will be contacted to determine if the ROR Remedial Action water withdrawal requirements would have possible impacts to species of concern (and habitats such as vernal pools).*

2. The Water Withdrawal and Uses Plan is supposed to describe how all the water withdrawals and uses of water are to be evaluated, however it does not identify any water users that 'release' water to the Rest of River area. This is a very important concern since water dischargers are releasing water under the National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) program that requires and allows for reliance on receiving system dilution or attenuation. In addition, these point discharges are a source of water that GE will need to manage during Rest of River remedy activities. In the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, EPA is the permitting authority and NPDES permits are typically co-issued by EPA and MassDEP. NPDES permits regulate wastewater discharges by limiting the quantities of pollutants to be discharged and imposing monitoring requirements and other conditions. A query made using EPA's Enforcement and Compliance History Online website (ECHO) identified 19 permitted point discharges within a portion of the Housatonic River (HUC 01100050104) which captures Sackett

Brook – Housatonic River subwatersheds (within the Rest of River). These point discharges include discharges from industrial facilities, wastewater treatment facilities, combined stormwater releases and construction stormwater permits (refer to table at end of document). TASC recommends that GE run a more comprehensive query to be sure a complete list of discharge points throughout the length of the Rest of River is completed.

*The community may want to ask EPA if the Water Withdrawal and Uses Plan document should be expanded to address the impacts to water users that release water to the Rest of River through the NPDES program. There are two areas of concern related to this issue including 1) the impact to the permissible point release conditions which may rely on receiving system dilution or attenuation, and 2) the impact of the released water to the Housatonic River during remedial action activities.*

3. The Water Withdrawal and Uses Plan does not clearly describe the anticipated water withdrawal rates (such as cubic feet per second (cfs) or percentages of the entire river flow) that are required to achieve the ROR remedy requirements. It is assumed that water will be routed away from a particular Remediation Unit during construction activities, and then the flows returned downgradient to maintain river flows. It is important to acknowledge the need to maintain certain instream flows for downstream municipal supply uses. For instance, historic water management inventories by MassDEP's Office of Water Resources indicate that water demands on the Housatonic River are substantial (MassDEP-OWR, 1999). The Office of Water Resources has documented streamflow threshold recommendations to meet ongoing demands. For instance, the Office of Water Resources notes that a flow of 0.64 cfs/mi (cubic feet per second per square mile) is the minimum amount of flow that should be left instream during an average summer month.

*The community may want to ask EPA if the water withdrawal activities are to be managed in order to maintain minimum instream flow requirements for municipal supply demands.*

4. Review of the Housatonic River water quality management plans (MassDEP-DWM, 2007) indicates that segments of the river are impaired with low dissolved oxygen concentrations, elevated nutrient concentrations and the presence of invasive macrophytes. The proposed water withdrawal activities may adversely affect or compound these existing impairment conditions. The Plan indicates that it will inventory the designated uses of the river to determine applicable ARARs. However, it does not indicate how the proposed water withdrawal activities will be controlled to minimize contribution to existing impairment issues.

*The community may want to ask if the proposed water withdrawal activities will be designed to minimize any contribution to downstream water quality impairment conditions.*

5. The Water Withdrawal and Uses Plan recognizes the need to inventory direct point source intakes from the Housatonic River. However, it may also be important to identify any groundwater use (nonpoint or indirect intake sources). . For instance, groundwater

well fields are common potable supply systems that can tap into river alluvial resource areas as their primary groundwater source. The interruption of a surface water supply that may feed a groundwater resource relied upon for domestic or agricultural use is an important consideration for this Plan's inventory of users.

*The community may want to ask EPA if GE plans to inventory groundwater supply systems located in close proximity to the river that may be impacted by the proposed water withdrawals.*

6. Section 2 of the Water Withdrawal and Uses Plan indicates that a variety of methods will be used to identify potential water users along the ROR. This section does call out the use of aerial photographs and in-field real-time inventories as possible resources. This comment is being provided to emphasize the use and need for aerial photographs on a larger scale (beyond immediate riverside areas) in order to track agricultural irrigation ditch systems. Agricultural ditch systems may be extensive and may not be observable at the point of intake in heavily forested areas using aerial photographs. However, the ditches may be observable using aerials that capture fields separated from the intake. It is important to interpret aerials that capture large adjacent settings to be sure ditch systems are inventoried.

*The community may want to ask EPA if GE plans to review aerials over larger areas adjacent to the river in order to identify existing, active agricultural ditch systems that may not be observable immediately adjacent to the riverbank (aerials of densely vegetated riverbank areas may mask the occurrence of a ditch intake).*

7. Community notification and communication is an important aspect to the Revised Final Permit and Statement of Work. The Water Withdrawal and Uses Plan explains the methods that will be used to develop a database of water users (refer to Section 2.2) that will help track and identify users that need to be forewarned of pending ROR remedy action. TASC recommends that these entities be included in an "email or phone call alert" notification system that actively alerts these entities when their intake is to be affected, and when their water resource is returned. These active communication alerts will likely be a valuable outreach to the community.

*The community may want to ask EPA if GE can create a water users electronic alert notification system in order to proactively notify water users of withdrawals and water returns.*

8. Section 4 of the Water Withdrawal and Uses Plan describes the proposed schedule for performing the water withdrawal and uses evaluation. TASC has two recommendations for this proposed schedule: 1) the Plan should provide a contingency plan when a documented water user is unresponsive to the GE notices regarding pending water use, and 2) this section should acknowledge that the "specific minimization/mitigation measures that will be implemented for water withdrawals and uses during remedial activities" will be one of the earliest steps outlined in the Final RD/RA Work Plans for each Remediation Unit. It is possible that certain landowners/water permit holders may

not receive notification of the pending water withdrawals. It may be necessary to post signage on these absentee landowners' parcels and pursue an additional outreach method. In addition, it should be acknowledged that notification of water withdrawals to water users will be an important early step in remedial action efforts.

*The community may want to ask EPA if this section of the Plan can be updated to describe a contingency plan to notify absent water users who may be unaware of pending water withdrawals, and to acknowledge that notification of water users is an important initial step in remedial action efforts.*



## References Cited

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| Water Pollution Search Results: Search Criteria: Year = 2022; HUC Code = 011000050104 |  |                  |       |
|---|--|------------------|-------|
| NPDES Permit Number   | Facility Name  | City             | State |
| MAR1002UO   | 2020/2021 LINE 1161 STRUCTURE REPLACEMENT PROJECT                                | LENOX            | MA    |
| MAR1003P4   | ASHLEY WATER TREATMENT PLANT UPGRADES  | DALTON           | MA    |
| MAR1003PX   | ASHLEY WATER TREATMENT PLANT UPGRADES  | DALTON           | MA    |
| MAR10047K   | ASHLEY WATER TREATMENT PLANT UPGRADES  | DALTON           | MA    |
| MAR1003Q0   | ASHLEY WATER TREATMENT PLANT UPGRADES - WASHINGTON                               | WASHINGTON       | MA    |
| MAR10047L   | ASHLEY WATER TREATMENT PLANT UPGRADES - WASHINGTON                               | WASHINGTON       | MA    |
| MAR1003P8   | ASHLEY WATER TREATMENT PLANT UPGRADES - WASHINGTON-DALTON                        | WASHINGTON       | MA    |
| MAR1003AS   | BOUSQUET MOUNTAIN SKI AREA   | PITTSFIELD       | MA    |
| MAR1000BD   | EVERSOURCE LINE 1211 AND 1161 ACCESS ROAD CONSTRUCTION AND STRUCTURE REPLACEMENT | PITTSFIELD/LENOX | MA    |
| MAR10017K   | EVERSOURCE LINE 1211/1161 REBUILD - OSWALD S/S TO OSWALD JCT                     | PITTSFIELD       | MA    |
| MA0100935   | LENOX CENTER WASTEWATER TREATMENT FACILITY                                       | LENOX            | MA    |
| MAR100019   | LENOX LANDFILL SOLAR DEVELOPMENT   | LENOX            | MA    |
| MAR1000SH   | MISS HALLS SCHOOL ATHLETIC FIELDS  | PITTSFIELD       | MA    |
| MAR1000T1   | MISS HALLS SCHOOL ATHLETIC FIELDS  | PITTSFIELD       | MA    |
| MAR05J00A   | NORTHEAST PAVING LENOXDALE PLANT   | LEE              | MA    |
| MA0101681   | PITTSFIELD WASTEWATER TREATMENT FACILITY   | PITTSFIELD       | MA    |
| MAR1001TC   | PITTSFIELD WASTEWATER TREATMENT FACILITY   | PITTSFIELD       | MA    |
| MAR10029G   | THE CENTER AT LENOX  | LENOX            | MA    |
| MAR1003KQ   | THE CENTER AT LENOX  | LENOX            | MA    |

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