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February 28, 2007

Honorary Magalie R. Salas, Secretary
Federal Energy Regulatory Commission
888 First Street, N.E., Room 1A
Washington, D.C. 20426

RE: Wells Hydroelectric Project No 2149-131
Preliminary Application Document and Scoping Document 1

Dear Secretary Salas:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Wells Hydroelectric Project, No.2149, Preliminary Application Document and Scoping Document No. 1 for Relicensing. The City of Pateros appreciates the efforts of Douglas PUD and the FERC in keeping stakeholders informed.

A number of recent actions have resulted in opportunities related to the City of Pateros and Douglas County PUD's Relicensing of the Wells Project. In 2005, the State of Washington developed the Okanogan Trails Corridor Management Plan (CMP) for a portion of US 97, the state designated scenic and recreational byway that extends from Pateros to the border between the United States and Canada. The name Okanogan Trails was selected because of a number of historic trails within and leading to the byway, including the rivers as "water trails". The CMP presents recommendations and strategies for enhancing visitors' experiences and tourism opportunities, while preserving unique resources contributing to the quality of life in the region. The City of Pateros, which is located at the confluence of the Columbia and Methow Rivers, is the southern gateway to the Okanogan Trails Scenic Byway. A regional Visitor Information Center to be located in Pateros is in the planning stages. Pateros is the closest community to Wells Dam, located approximately 8 miles downstream from the city. With limited access and operation of the Visitor Information Center in the Wells Dam powerhouse due to security concerns, an opportunity exists for a partnership between Pateros and Douglas PUD to share in providing public information on Wells Dam and the reservoir at the new Visitor Information Center in Pateros. This urban setting of the Visitor Information Center in the City of Pateros would be consistent with "the District's commitment to natural resource conservation". It is proposed that an investigation into this opportunity be addressed in the Relicensing process.

In December 2005, the Pateros City Council accepted a Downtown Business Plan addressing the interaction between the City's commercial business district, Memorial Park, and the river. A key element of the plan is a public pier, plaza, and historic/interpretive features in the park associated with Ives' Landing, honoring the original founder/namesake of the community. The riverfront area throughout Memorial Park is rip-rapped providing limited interaction and accessibility to the water. The pier would provide a safe, publicly accessible means of connecting people with the dynamic river throughout the year. Secondly, the plan calls for a covered pavilion or similar structure to serve as a focal point for events in the park. This would provide for interpretive and historic presentations in the riverfront setting including the significant impact of hydropower, cultural impacts over time associated with changes in the Columbia River, and other subjects of interest to the community and visitors alike. The 1982 Public Use Plan emphasized that "the facilities that are available largely control what people are able to do, and if the facilities do not exist, then people are not participating in those activities". It is requested that the recreation needs studies include public use facilities that provide greater accessibility and use; river based cultural and historical themes, and informational opportunities.

As part of the 1987 Recreational Action Plan for development of Memorial and Peninsula Parks, Pateros agreed to provide maintenance and operation of these facilities, which it has done. Park operation costs have risen, while city population and city resources have diminished in a relative sense over the years. While the City has not tracked specific costs, it would like to work with the Douglas PUD to come up with an assessment of future maintenance and operation costs over the next Relicensing period. Development of a maintenance management plan for the parks is one way to assess the overall operational impacts and identify opportunities for the City and Douglas PUD to work cooperatively over the next license term. The City of Pateros requests that maintenance and operation needs for Memorial and Peninsula Parks, Tennis Courts, and boat launches be studied and costs assessed. This includes water and wastewater use and utility impacts.

New development is already occurring and will continue to increase in our area. One of the recreational demands often heard by City staff is the need for boat storage. Much of the boating demand is by visitors from the Puget Sound area across the Cascade Mountains, 150 to 200 miles away. The ability to store boats in Pateros in or out of the water would be of significant benefit to boat owners and the environment. It is asked that Douglas PUD study the need for and benefits of boat storage.

The City of Pateros has numerous concerned local citizens and businesses affected as a result of granted "Permits for Use of Wells Reservoir Area". All of the City of Pateros riverfront property borders Douglas PUD reservoir land. It is asked that Douglas PUD study the direct, indirect, and/or cumulative impact of the Wells Dam Project on local communities.

Douglas PUD recently secured an interest in the Cascade-Columbia River Railroad right-of-way between Wells Dam and the City of Brewster. The railroad right-of-way generally follows the Columbia River, but as it crosses the Methow River it swings inland and passes through the City of Pateros' commercial business district. Should the railroad abandon its interest, the City of Pateros will be greatly impacted by whatever actions Douglas PUD takes on the property. The City proposes that Douglas PUD include alternatives for use of this riverfront property including recreational trails and sidewalk linkages between the urban parks.

The City of Pateros will work with Douglas PUD on the details of the requested studies. We are pleased with the opportunity to present these issues and concerns directly to FERC staff and will provide further detail in written comments prior to April 2, 2007.

Sincerely,

Gail A. Howe, Mayor
City of Pateros

C: Bill Dobbins, General Manager, Douglas County PUD; Mayor Lee Webster, Brewster;
Mayor Steve Jenkins, Bridgeport

Submission Contents

Scoping Document Comments

Pateros_FERC_Comments.doc..... 1-3