



# United States Department of the Interior

## FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

Washington Ecological Services  
1009 College St. SE, Suite 215  
Lacey, Washington 98503



April 22, 2024

Debbie-Anne Reese, Acting Secretary  
Federal Energy Regulatory Commission  
888 First Street, N.E.  
Washington, DC 20426

Dear Acting Secretary Reese:

Subject: Newhalem Creek Hydroelectric Project Decommission Environmental Assessment

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the Environmental Assessment of the proposed decommissioning of the Newhalem Creek Hydroelectric Project (FERC No. 2705-037) (hereafter referred to as the Project), dated March 29, 2024. The 30-day comment period ends on April 29, 2024.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) requests an extension of 14 days or until May 13, 2024 to comment on the Environmental Assessment. This extension is requested to provide adequate time to consult with the National Park Service, Washington State Historic Preservation Officer, and area tribes. Additionally, an extension would accommodate an unusually high workload associated with participating in the Skagit Hydroelectric Project (P-553) relicensing settlement negotiations and addressing issues associated with the Skagit Hydroelectric Project (P-553) license implementation (including the likelihood of not filling Ross reservoir again this year).

Finally, stakeholders, including the USFWS, have also been invited to discuss aspects of the Project decommissioning (i.e., tailrace barrier and access road) with Seattle City Light on April 30, 2024; outcomes from this meeting may affect our position and comments related the preferred alternative.

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### PACIFIC REGION 1

IDAHO, OREGON\*, WASHINGTON,  
AMERICAN SAMOA, GUAM, HAWAII, NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

\*PARTIAL

Debbie-Anne Reese

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We thank you for considering our current circumstances and the importance of the Newhalem Creek Hydroelectric Project to the USFWS when evaluating this request. If you have any questions, please contact Jeffrey Garnett, [jeffrey\\_garnett@fws.gov](mailto:jeffrey_garnett@fws.gov).

Sincerely,

**ELIZABETH  
GRATTON**

Digitally signed by  
ELIZABETH GRATTON  
Date: 2024.04.22  
10:02:03 -06'00'

*for* Brad Thompson, State Supervisor  
Washington Fish and Wildlife Office

cc:  
FERC, Washington, DC (D. Shannon)

Document Content(s)

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