

A Community Dependent on Its Water Infrastructure



When a community is built upon infrastructure that dates back almost a century and a half, its removal, even temporarily, can have vast and costly effects. When work was slated for the Glasgo Dam, neighbors had no idea that they might have to foot a \$6-\$7k bill for new wells or go without drinking water for nearly a year. But in 2014, that is exactly what happened. A scheduled draw-down of the old Glasgo Pond caused residential wells in the surrounding community to go dry. Residents were completely caught off guard, scrambling to regain a source of water for their families. By July 2015, the CT Bond Commission had to allocate \$5.8 million to mitigate for the loss of non-power benefits associated with the dam.

CT has 4,800 dams scattered throughout the state, many of which are well over 100 years old. When no longer supported, these structures fall into disrepair and can have a devastating impact on the communities and ecosystems they've long cultivated. While nearly 75% of these relics of America's Industrial Revolution are now under the state's care, there are still dams in CT upheld and maintained by independent owners through the small hydropower industry. Selling the electricity these dams produce, is how the independent owner is able to keep the structure stable and safe for years to come.

Unfortunately, that has become increasingly more difficult. The value of electricity produced at a hydroelectric plant is no longer sufficient enough to maintain and improve the clean energy production, or the other non-power benefits provided by these Projects.

Hydroelectricity is a clean energy source and more, however, it is currently overlooked in CT's renewable marketplace. Hydropower is not just renewable energy, it is supporting maintenance to the infrastructure and services our communities rely on.

Including existing small hydro in renewable energy policy can not only help mitigate the risk of failing infrastructure through more stable revenue streams, but also supports a diverse electrical grid, employment in rural areas, recreational lakes, and are important existing contributors to clean energy goals.

MA, VT, NH, RI, and NY all have programs in place to support small hydro in the energy market because they recognize the greater value these small hydro assets actually provide.

Expand CT's existing Virtual Net Metering program to allow for existing small hydropower projects to continue to provide decades of service to the citizens of Connecticut.