

The Difference Policy Makes



Roughly 30 miles apart, the contrasting fates of two small hydroelectric stations were recently determined not by the dedication of their operating teams, but by the policy and treatment that varies across state lines.

Massachusetts

In Glendale, Massachusetts, a more than 100-year-old small hydro facility will continue to provide reliable, clean energy to its rural community for another 50 years. This extended life was secured by a nearly \$1 Million reinvestment into the Project. In addition to providing clean electricity and long-term employment to its town of fewer than 2,000 people for several decades to come, the \$1 Million investment infused the local economy through contractors, equipment rental, supplies, and services.

This investment would not have been possible if the owner could not identify a positive economic future or return on investment. The state of Massachusetts, like most of its neighbors, helps to provide that long-term financial viability through renewable energy policies that support existing small hydro; policies like tariffs and the option to sell Renewable Energy Credits. These policies provide reliability to small hydro owners, operators, and their communities.

Connecticut

While a century-old small hydro can thrive in Glendale, MA, a small hydro project of the same magnitude was being decommissioned just 20 minutes away in Colebrook, CT. After only 33 years of operations, this potentially long-term asset was pulled offline well before its functional end-of-life because it was deemed not financially viable. Owned and operated by Hartford's Metropolitan District (MDC), the Colebrook small hydro project surrendered its Federal operating license along with its ability to continue providing clean energy to the community and state. Undervalued energy revenues at Colebrook could not justify maintenance and operations, even for the MDC's eight municipality conglomerate.

Despite sending the same amount of electricity to the grid, the small hydro plant in MA justified \$1 Million in renovations, while the plant in CT could not even afford to continue operating. To be clear, it was Policy that made the difference. 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.

Effective CT policy is within reach.

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

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