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Marilyn Sabido
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Division of Dam Safety and Inspections – Chicago Regional Office
Federal Energy Regulatory Commission
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**Re: Project No. 11730 Alverno Project**
**Related to the Protest of Black Lake Preservation Society requesting a revised Flood Management Protocol for the Black Lake and Alverno Dams of the Alverno Hydroelectric Project under P-11730**

Greetings,

On May 26, 2026, The Black Lake Preservation Society (BLPS) wrote a letter to EGLE Director Phil Roos and DNR Director Scott Bowen requesting an EGLE-led review of the Flood Management Protocol for Black Lake and the Alverno Dam of the Alverno Hydroelectric Project (P11730). We feel that it is important to review the performance of the interim protocol during extreme flood conditions present during the late winter and early spring of 2026. Our request was directed to EGLE based on our interpretation of authority granted for dam safety and lake level management by Michigan Compiled Law. This letter was posted as a complaint in the FERC eLibrary on 7/8/2026. The BLPS received a reply authored by Jerrod Sanders, Director of Water Resources Division, and the BLPS was offered additional clarifications and direction from a follow-up phone conversation with Douglas Bridges, Environmental Engineer, EGLE Water Resources Division.

The BLPS understands that the Alverno Dam is currently operating under an interim protocol until the FERC license amendment request (LAR) process is completed. Furthermore, the authority to make or approve modifications to the interim protocol rests with FERC (and not with EGLE) for dams with a hydro plant operation, and the authority to implement and enforce that protocol rests with the Cheboygan County Circuit Court. The Cheboygan County authority and responsibility for implementation and enforcement began with the passage of the legal lake levels set in August 28, 1964, and continues until they establish a delegated authority to act in their interest.

Therefore, the BLPS is asking FERC to consider the requests made in the letter to EGLE in the complaint filed on 7/8/2026 prior to completion of the LAR process. These requests would, in our opinion, assist the county with improved implementation and enforcement of the legal lake levels. Two of the requests stand out as most critical. The first is a verified, successful completion of a winter drawdown to 610.5 feet above sea level. This has been proven to be achievable year after year in the past. With periodic and ongoing flood conditions in the spring, it should be agreeable to all that we need the storage capacity for spring flooding offered by a full drawdown to the legal lake level. The BLPS does not view this as a difficult or unreasonable request for the protection of private property.

The second important request is the installation of USGS gauges of flows at Kleber Dam and Alverno Dam (including spillways) along with elevations at the Alverno head pond and in the lake. The BLPS has been advised that the cost of these gauges is not thought to be practical for dams under 10MW. We respectfully request that this decision consider private property owner costs/consequences in addition to the hydro plant yield/revenue. The BLPS is open to exploring options for sharing the cost of the gauging, if necessary. Our community is highly sensitized to flood exposure, and lack of timely and accurate information contributes to stress and distrust among property owners. Improved access to data would, in our opinion, result in improved preparedness for and avoidance of risk of flood damage along with improved relations and cooperation among dam operations, regulatory agencies, and property owners.

Certainly, the Alverno Dam has limited impact on Black Lake during extreme flood events, but the BLPS feels that this is precisely the reason that we need to maximize the impact of all variables that we have control over: strict adherence to the drawdown level determined by past engineering studies, use of weather and USGS gauge information to anticipate flood conditions, and initiating "adverse condition" actions proactively.

Thank you for consideration of our urgent requests.

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VIA EMAIL

cc: Dave Capka, FERC

Nicholas Tackett, FERC

Marilyn Sabido, FERC

Jeffrey Lawson, Cheboygan County Board of Commissioners

M. Scott Bowen, Director, DNR

Michelle Crook, DNR

Phillip D. Roos, Director, EGLE

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