



## Co-op's hydro-power plan works, Schumer says in letter to DEP

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— By Patricia Breakey  
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The Delaware County Electric Cooperative's initiative to harness water spilling from four New York City reservoirs \_ producing enough electricity to power 20,000 typical homes \_ was endorsed Thursday by Sen. Charles Schumer, D-N.Y. The co-op submitted an application for a preliminary permit and a pre-application document to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission in May, according to Greg Starheim, DCEC chief executive officer.

Schumer sent a letter to New York City Department of Environmental Protection Commissioner Emily Lloyd urging the DEP to cooperate with the co-op to develop minimal-impact hydro plants that do not impact the quality or quantity of drinking water. "For decades, upstate New York counties have been hosts of New York City's priceless drinkingwater supply," Schumer said in a media release.

"While a vital part of the state's success comes from the purity of the drinking- water system, in doing so, they've shouldered roadblocks to their own economic and infrastructure development. So, it's time to even the playing field a little."

Schumer wrote in the letter: "The development of hydro plants that convert the release and spillover of water from these reservoirs into a clean, sustainable form of energy will provide benefits to the surrounding communities, these same communities that support the watershed." Starheim said the proposed Western Catskills Hydro Project would involve installing modular design independent intake structures at New York City's Schoharie, Pepacton, Cannonsville and Neversink reservoirs. Michael Saucier, DEP public affairs director, said previously that the agency is looking forward to reviewing and discussing the DCEC proposal. Starheim said there are no generating facilities at the four dams included in the project.

The decision to move ahead with the application process came about when DCEC officials became aware that two private international developers were interested in generating projects at two of the reservoirs.

Starheim said obtaining a federal license is a long process that involves numerous studies and structure milestones, but the co-op is hopeful the license will be issued as early as 2011.

He said construction and operation would take a year or two after that.

The amount of electricity generated at the dams would be seasonal and dependent on the amount of water being released.

The project is part of DCEC's effort to explore ways to secure its electricity supply using renewable local energy sources, officials have said.

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