



FERC Will Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement on Relicensing the Penobscot Mills and Ripogenus Dams on Maine's West Branch Penobscot River; Comments Due November 6

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FERC staff will write a full environmental impact statement on new licenses for Great Lakes Hydro America's 67.9-megawatt Penobscot Mills and 37.5-megawatt Ripogenus hydro projects on the West Branch of the Penobscot River. Scoping comments are due November 6, 2026, with a draft EIS planned for July 2027.

Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) staff will prepare a draft and final environmental impact statement (EIS) on relicensing two hydroelectric projects on the West Branch of the Penobscot River in Maine. The notice of intent is on Federal Register public inspection as FR Doc. 2026-20882 (Project Nos. P-2458-273 and P-2572-141).

The projects

- Penobscot Mills Project (FERC No. 2458), 67.9 MW. The North Twin, Millinocket, Dolby and East Millinocket developments, plus the Millinocket Lake storage development on Millinocket Stream, in Piscataquis and Penobscot counties
- Ripogenus Project (FERC No. 2572), 37.5 MW. Includes Ripogenus dam, which is 795 feet long, on the West Branch
- Applicant: Great Lakes Hydro America, LLC, which filed for new major licenses September 30, 2024
- FERC says neither project occupies federal land

Why an EIS

After comments from scoping (2021) and from its June 29, 2026 ready-for-environmental-analysis notices, FERC staff decided that licensing "may constitute a major federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment." Proposals in the record include minimum flows below the dams, whitewater boating flows of 600 cubic feet per second in Millinocket Stream, fish passage at North Twin dam, and shoreline buffers around the reservoirs.

Key dates

- November 6, 2026, 5 p.m. Eastern: extra scoping comments due
- July 2027: draft EIS planned, with a 45-day comment period
- March 31, 2028: final EIS planned

How to comment

Use FERC eComment or eFiling at [ferc.gov](https://www.ferc.gov), or mail the Secretary, FERC, 888 First Street NE, Washington, DC 20426. Cite P-2458-273 and/or P-2572-141. Anyone who commented before does not need to file again. Office of Public Participation: (202) 502-6595.

Why it matters locally

River flows, reservoir levels and whitewater releases on the West Branch shape the Millinocket-area economy and recreation, including rafting below Ripogenus dam. The new licenses could last decades.

Source

- Federal Register public inspection, FR Doc. 2026-20882, FERC, "Great Lakes Hydro America, LLC; Notice of Intent to Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement for the Penobscot Mills and Ripogenus Hydroelectric Projects, Schedule for Environmental Review, and Request for Comments."

Notes

- Image: Aerial view of Dolby Pond and Dolby Dam on the West Branch Penobscot River near East Millinocket, Maine. Photo: Quintin Soloviev via Wikimedia Commons (CC BY 4.0).
- Author: Ryan Standley / Record of Sale, LLC / Notice Nearby.
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