Nathaniel Gillespie

Woodland Valley Farm, LLC/ Woodland Valley Woods, LLC

624 Woodland Valley Road

Phoenicia, NY 12464

April 4, 2021

**Re: Motion to Intervene on Project # 15056-000, Ashokan Pumped Storage Project**

**Dear FERC,**

**I am filing a motion to intervene for proposed project #15056, Ashokan Pumped Storage Project. I co-own 9.1 acres of property at 624 Woodland Valley Rd (24.8.1.11), and am a member of Woodland Valley Woods, LLC, 20 acres in size, and Woodland Valley Farm, LLC, approximately 105 acres in size, which would be inundated by the proposed reservoir in Woodland Valley associated with the proposed Ashokan Pumped Storage Project.**

**Our family has owned and lived on this property since 1835, making me a seventh-generation owner of land that would have to be taken away by imminent domain to be buried forever under water. The property includes a homestead constructed in 1865 following the conclusion of the Civil War and an original barn built in that era. We have a gravesite on the property, and numerous family heirlooms from generations of family who were born on, who served the military during the Civil War, the First World War and World War II, who worked, and who died on this property. Our family has invested significant time in collaboration with NYC DEP to serve as good stewards of the property in its important role in contributing clean drinking water downstream to New York residents, including the sale of a 97-acre conservation easement to NYC DEP in 2014 that sacrificed our right to further subdivide and develop much of the property in perpetuity to help ensure watershed protection. We adopted a Forest Management Stewardship plan through NYC DEP in 2014 and entered the Woodland Valley Woods, LLC property into the National Tree Farm System to ensure best management practices and long-term sustainable management ensures water quality, wildlife and timber conservation for future generations. Our family is involved in important American Chestnut restoration with the New York Chapter of the American Chestnut Society on the property. I, as well as my family, would therefore be impacted financially, physically, and on a very real level, spiritually, from the proposed project #15056.**

**Not only is this property invaluable to me and my family, the proposed reservoir construction and operation would generate unacceptable risk to New York City DEP’s unfiltered water supply downstream in the Ashokan Reservoir via numerous short-term and long-term impacts. The property currently serves an important role in maintaining the unfiltered water supply for New York City Department of Environmental Protection (NYC DEP) via its contribution to the high- water quality currently found in Woodland Valley Creek, its floodplains, and several tributaries and wetlands located on the property. The proposed reservoir and pumped storage operation would literally destroy all of these important hydrological resources. Construction of the reservoir dam, associated blasting for the dam and connecting underground tunnel, land clearing and clearcutting to remove standing vegetation beneath the reservoir pool, and roadbuilding to replace many miles of Woodland Valley Road would all cause significant fine sediment, turbidity and water quality impacts to Woodland Creek, Esopus Creek and the Ashokan Reservoir for many years. But the major water quality impacts would not be limited to the 5 or more years of construction and disturbance: the daily fluctuation of the proposed Woodland Valley Reservoir to serve the pumped storage needs would erode and resuspend fine sediment and colloidal clay found in numerous naturally-occurring glacial lacustrine clay deposits throughout the stream, floodplain and valley. The underlying geology therefore would contribute turbidity to Esopus Creek and the Ashokan reservoir potentially on a daily basis, causing great impact and unacceptable risk to New York City’s drinking water supply to over 9 million people.**

**The Woodland Creek serves as an important and valued recreational resource in its current state for me and my family as well. The Woodland Creek is a storied wild trout fishery, and provides very significant spawning and rearing habitat for wild brook, brown and rainbow trout which migrate annually from the Ashokan Reservoir and the Esopus Creek to use these fertile headwaters to spawn. The proposed reservoir would eliminate the current fishery within more than 3 miles of Woodland Creek, it would forever sever the vital connection of more than 13 miles of coldwater habitat used by trout in the Esopus Creek/Ashokan Reservoir causing significant impact to this recreationally valuable fishery. If the proposed project is permitted to be constructed, it would also degrade the Esopus Creek fishery downstream from altered water temperature, sediment regime and water quality impacts from the proposed reservoir construction and operation. Due to the potential negative effects of the proposed pumped storage reservoir on the Woodland Creek, Esopus Creek and Ashokan Reservoir and their cherished wild trout fishery, I am filing as an intervenor as well.**

**Sincerely,**

**Nathaniel Gillespie**