

Stuart Botchford
Botchford Heritage Preservation, LLC
622 Woodland Valley Road
Phoenicia, NY 12464

April 12, 2021

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

Dear FERC,

Please accept this motion to intervene for proposed project #15056, Ashokan Pumped Storage Project. I am a member of the Botchford Heritage Preservation, LLC, which owns 58.7 acres of property at 622 Woodland Valley Rd (parcel 24.8.1.5.100). The Woodland Valley Creek cuts through the property that would be inundated by the reservoir in Woodland Valley associated with the proposed Ashokan Pumped Storage Project.

My family has lived on and worked on this property for nearly 200 years, making me and my daughters seventh and eighth generation owners of land that would have to be taken away by eminent domain. 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 to New York City residents, including the sale of substantially all of the property into conservation easement, which sacrificed our right to further subdivide and develop the property in perpetuity to help ensure watershed protection. I, as well as my family, would be impacted financially, physically, and emotionally, from the proposed project #15056.

In addition to my family's personal reasons for opposing the approval of this project, the Ashokan Pumped Storage Project makes little sense from the perspective of the public good. The potential benefits are small relative to the costs that would be borne by a huge number of New York residents. First, inundating Woodland Valley (and the property in question specifically) would generate an unacceptable level risk to New York City DEP's unfiltered water supply downstream in the Ashokan Reservoir. The property in question 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. The proposed reservoir and pumped storage operation would destroy all of these important hydrological resources. Construction of the reservoir dam, with associated blasting and land clearing would cause significant turbidity and impact water quality in the Woodland Valley Creek, Esopus Creek and the Ashokan Reservoir for decades. The 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 would erode and resuspend fine sediment and clay found in 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, a significant impact 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, my family, and the public 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 cold-water habitat used by trout in the Esopus Creek/Ashokan Reservoir causing significant impact to this recreationally valuable fishery, and would degrade the Esopus Creek fishery downstream.

The Creek runs through the historic Woodland Valley Campground, built by the Civilian Conservation Corps during the Great Depression, which brings thousands of people to the area each year. Tourism is the lifeblood of the town of Phoenicia, and this project would be a disaster for the livelihoods of hundreds of residents who rely on business created by hikers, anglers, campers, nature lovers, leaf-peepers, and other visitors to the area. Due to the potential impacts of the proposed reservoir on the economic, natural, and social wellbeing of my family, the Town of Shandaken, Hamlet of Phoenicia, and the residents of the State of New York I am filing as an intervenor as well.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S Botchford', with a large, sweeping initial 'S'.

Steuart Botchford

Member

Botchford Heritage Preservation, LLC