



Seneca Nation of Indians

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media Contacts

Leslie Logan
Seneca Nation
716.532.4900
716.548.6612 (c)
leslie.logan@sni.org

Steve Bell
Eric Mower and Associates
716-880-1449
716.548.9199 (c)
sbell@mower.com

Seneca Nation Seeks Kinzua Hydro License

Nation in Strong Position to Run Seneca Pumped Storage Project

ALLEGANY TERRITORY, Salamanca, NY Nov. 30, 2010 – The Seneca Nation of Indians applied to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission to operate the Seneca Pumped Storage Project at the Kinzua Dam site, President Robert Odawi Porter announced today.

The pumped storage hydropower project generates 450 megawatts of electricity, which corporate interests have sold and profited from for 40 years without compensating the Nation. The hydropower project relies on and every day uses Seneca Nation land and water.

“Filing for the license to operate the Seneca Pumped Storage Project is an especially profound opportunity and a significant moment in time for the Seneca Nation, given the historic injustice that was imposed on our people with the building of the Kinzua Dam,” said President Porter. “The flooding of our lands more than 45 years ago resulted in large-scale, forcible removal of families, destruction of homes and loss of significant lands to which we were spiritually tied. For these reasons, we are entitled to obtain the license because of the historic injustice committed against us,” he said.

Authorized by Congress with the Flood Control Acts of 1936 and 1938, the Army Corps of Engineers built the Kinzua Dam near Warren, PA, between 1960 and its opening in 1965. The purpose of the \$108 million dam was flood control and pollution flushing, but in 1970 the federal government also gave away the right to generate hydropower to private, for-profit utility companies – now estimated at \$13 million in profits annually. The dam controls a watershed area twice the size of the state of Rhode Island, 2,180 square miles. The reservoir that resulted flooded 10,000 acres of Seneca land, displacing more than 800 Senecas and flooding graves.

The hydropower project was already permitted by the federal government before the Seneca Nation was informed of plans for its construction. The Nation has never been invited to share in the significant financial benefits. The Nation is committed to operate and improve it.

FirstEnergy Corp., headquartered in Akron, OH, currently holds the 50-year license to operate the pumped storage project. That license expires in 2015 and it intends to reapply.

“What cannot be ignored or dismissed is the fact that the Seneca Nation never conveyed our reserved water rights on the Allegheny River for any purpose, hydropower or otherwise. When the Kinzua Dam was built, not only was our land destroyed from the floods, but our treaty rights were dealt a serious and devastating blow,” said President Porter. “We stand here today to ensure this does not happen again: To protect our water rights; to defend our treaties; to manage our resources properly; and to build a sustainable future for the Seneca people.”

Wendy Huff, executive director of the Nation’s Kinzua Dam Relicensing Commission, said the commission expects the relicensing process to take at least five years. The Seneca Nation has already been proactively engaged in preparing for and building a case for acquiring the license for the past four years.

The Seneca Nation Council established the KDRC to facilitate all aspects of the application process. Working within the governmental structure of the Seneca Nation, the commission will be the point of contact for all relicensing queries from the U.S. Government and all other interested parties.

“The Seneca Nation is strong, and we are capable and serious about acquiring the license to operate the Seneca Pumped Storage Project,” said Huff. “We will not sit idly or silently by and watch our water flow through our territory for others’ benefit and prosperity.”

For more information on the Seneca Pumped Storage Project, visit www.senecaproject.com.

More About The Seneca Nation of Indians

The Seneca Nation of Indians, one of the six nations of the Haudenosaunee [Iroquois] Confederacy, continues to live on its aboriginal lands in Western New York. The Senecas' long history includes providing constitutional and governmental traditions used by founders of the United States. The Seneca Nation traditionally controlled trade and protected the Western Haudenosaunee territories as the "Keeper of the Western Door." The Nation's five sovereign territories comprise 31,095 acres along the Allegheny River; 22,011 acres along Cattaraugus Creek near Lake Erie known as the Cattaraugus Territory; one square mile in Cuba, called the Oil Spring Territory; 30 acres in Niagara Falls, and 9 acres in Buffalo. The Allegany Territory contains the City of Salamanca within its boundaries. Thousands of acres of land in southern New York and northern Pennsylvania were taken from the Seneca when the federal government built the Kinzua Dam. More than 800 Seneca were forcibly evicted from their land in the early 1960s. The Nation today operates a \$1.1 billion economy that employs more than 6,000 people.

