

## **Immediate Release**

Tuesday, July 20, 2021

### **Media Contacts:**

Betsy Nicholas, (202) 423-0504, [betsy@waterkeeperschesapeake.org](mailto:betsy@waterkeeperschesapeake.org)

Ted Evgeniadis, (609) 571-5278, [riverkeeper@lowersusquehannariverkeeper.org](mailto:riverkeeper@lowersusquehannariverkeeper.org), Lower Susquehanna Riverkeeper

### **Waterkeeper Groups Condemn Governor Hogan's Move to Support Unlawful License of Conowingo Dam**

(Takoma Park, MD) Yesterday, Governor Larry Hogan directed the state to intervene in an appeal of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission's (FERC) order granting a 50-year license for Exelon's operations of the Conowingo Dam. [This appeal](#) was brought by Waterkeepers Chesapeake, Lower Susquehanna Riverkeeper and Sassafra Riverkeeper represented by Earthjustice and joined by Chesapeake Bay Foundation because FERC's license fails to meet the legal requirements for issuing the 50-year license and fails to protect Maryland's water quality. Waterkeepers Chesapeake, Lower Susquehanna Riverkeeper, Sassafra Riverkeeper and Earthjustice released the following statement in response:

"There is no reason and no need for the state to intervene in this appeal. We filed this appeal against FERC for their unlawful issuance of a license, yet the state of Maryland is intervening to defend that license. Governor Hogan has decided to spend public time and money to let Exelon off the hook for paying its fair share of the cleanup at Conowingo Dam, leaving the taxpayers in the bay region to cover over 8 billion dollars needed for the term of the license.

The cleanup requirements under the Chesapeake Bay Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) cannot be met under the license issued by FERC. It will allow unchecked sediment, nutrients, debris and other pollution to continue going downstream and destroy aquatic species such as shad, mussels, oysters and crabs, along with decimating the revenue for those who depend on these species for their livelihood.

Exelon has not maintained the dam's reservoir, allowing 200 million tons of sediment to collect. This now poses the biggest threat to the Bay when extreme storms scour this sediment and transport it into the Bay, smothering subaquatic vegetation, causing massive dead zones, and killing fish. In addition, Exelon's dam operations have wiped out tens of millions of mussels in the Susquehanna River that would have filtered and cleaned pollution entering the river upstream in Pennsylvania.

A 2017 economic study commissioned by CBF and The Nature Conservancy determined Exelon could provide \$27 million to \$44 million per year to reduce the Conowingo Dam's environmental impact while still generating a profit. This report also found that total revenues for Conowingo Dam operations range between \$115 million to

\$121 million annually. Yet, Exelon's use of the Susquehanna River, a public resource, has resulted in catastrophic damage to the ecosystem. Exelon doesn't pay a dime in rent, and has failed for decades to maintain the reservoir so that it's now a public menace. In the face of all that, Maryland's governor has chosen to make the public pay Exelon's cleanup bill, to the tune of approximately \$8 billion.

Marylanders should ask who is Governor Hogan representing? Since we will be losing our seafood species, increasing risk to downstream communities, and adding millions of dollars of financial burden to the taxpayers of Maryland, it seems like he has forgotten that he should represent the best interest of Maryland residents."

For more information about Conowingo Dam, go to <https://waterkeeperschesapeake.org/conowingo-dam/>

###

**Waterkeepers Chesapeake** fights for clean water and a healthy environment by supporting Waterkeepers throughout the Chesapeake and coastal regions as they protect their communities, rivers, and streams from pollution. [www.waterkeeperschesapeake.org](http://www.waterkeeperschesapeake.org)

**Lower Susquehanna Riverkeeper Association** is dedicated to improving the ecological health of the Lower Susquehanna River Watershed and the Chesapeake Bay. Current and future citizens of the Lower Susquehanna River Watershed deserve high water quality, wise and sustainable use of all aquatic resources, and preservation of aesthetic value of our waterways. Improvement will come about through education, research, advocacy, and insistence upon compliance with the law. [www.lowersusquehannariverkeeper.org](http://www.lowersusquehannariverkeeper.org)

**ShoreRivers** protects and restores Eastern Shore waterways through science-based advocacy, restoration, and education. ShoreRivers is the home of four Riverkeepers for the Sassafras, Chester, Miles-Wye and Choptank Rivers. [www.shorerivers.org](http://www.shorerivers.org)

**Earthjustice** is the premier nonprofit public interest environmental law organization. It wields the power of law and the strength of partnership to protect people's health, to preserve magnificent places and wildlife, to advance clean energy, and to combat climate change. [www.Earthjustice.org](http://www.Earthjustice.org)