

1. INTRODUCTION

The New York State Canal Corporation (“NYSCC”) is a public benefit corporation organized under the laws of the State of New York to operate and maintain the New York State Canal System (“Canal System”), which spans 524 miles across New York from Lake Champlain to the Great Lakes. One of the dams that was historically used to control water levels on the Canal System is DeRuyter Dam, which is owned by the State of New York under the jurisdiction of NYSCC. The dam is located at the north end of the DeRuyter Reservoir in Central New York, within the Towns of Cazenovia and DeRuyter in Madison County and the Town of Fabius in Onondaga County. The majority of the reservoir lies within the Town of DeRuyter.

DeRuyter Reservoir is 557 acres in size and was built between 1861-1863 to supply water to the Old Erie Canal. It was constructed along with a 1-mile-long man-made diversion channel and diversion dam which diverted water from the East Branch of the Tioughnioga Creek in the Upper Susquehanna Subbasin to the reservoir, which is located in the Oswego River/Finger Lakes Basin. The water from DeRuyter Reservoir is no longer used for Canal System operations, and the diversion channel has not been actively used since the 1990s. DeRuyter Reservoir is one of the larger waterbodies in the area. It supports a significant year-round residential population and provides important quality-of-life benefits for local residents as well as recreational opportunities for visitors to the area.

DeRuyter Dam has been classified by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (“NYSDEC”) as a large Class C, high hazard dam. NYSCC has identified a public safety need to rehabilitate the dam and is currently preparing to undertake necessary maintenance and repairs to the dam in order to rectify dam safety deficiencies in embankment stability and spillway capacity and erosion. The dam rehabilitation will include placing additional fill on the embankments, installing a drainage system, making site improvements, repairing the spillway chute, and performing work on the dam’s low-level outlets. The proposed work will bring the dam into conformance with generally accepted best management practices and engineering judgment.

In order to maintain safe conditions while performing the dam rehabilitation, NYSCC must temporarily draw down the reservoir’s water surface elevation by ten feet, which is seven feet more than the typical winter drawdown of three feet. Once the rehabilitation work is complete, NYSCC plans to supplement the natural refilling of the reservoir by installing a temporary water diversion system at its diversion structure to reactivate the diversion channel and divert water from the Tioughnioga Creek. NYSCC is proposing to temporarily divert and withdraw up to 4.3 million gallons per day (MGD), at a rate not to exceed 6.7 cubic feet per second (cfs), over a period of 5-12 months for a total diversion of up to 750 million gallons. The temporary diversion will refill the reservoir more quickly and assist in mitigating impacts to the reservoir and the surrounding communities. Once the refill is complete, NYSCC will remove the temporary water diversion system and place a permanent berm in the diversion channel to prevent future flows from entering the diversion channel.