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1.0 General Comments Expressing Concerns About the Cost of the Draft Permit

Comment VII.1.1	AR-1064, AR-1119 (also read at public hearing)
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William O'Brien, Speaker of the New Hampshire House of Representatives

I am writing to express my concerns with the recent draft National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permit mandating a water cooling facility at Public Service of New Hampshire's Merrimack Station in Bow, New Hampshire. The EPA's draft permit shows great disregard for our state's economy, and is a significant threat to jobs in our state.

At a time when we are doing everything we can to make New Hampshire more competitive and attractive to employers, the federal government is seeking to punish our residents and small businesses with higher electric rates through unnecessary regulation. The Granite State already has among the highest energy costs in the nation, and this federal mandate will make these costs even higher and make it harder to expand our economy and grow good, new jobs here.

If the current Administration is truly interested in helping create new jobs, it would stop his overzealous regulatory mandate immediately. We accept the fact that the Obama Administration will not be assisting our country in allowing businesses to create new jobs. In New Hampshire, all we ask is that it not actively work to prevent job growth here. The working families and small businesses of New Hampshire simply can't afford EPA adding a \$112 million mandate onto our electric bills.

I also object to the EPA attempting to burden New Hampshire electric customers with a costly mandate that is based on regulations that have not been approved. As the agency recognized in

its recent letter extending the comment period on this permit, “it remains unavoidably uncertain at the present time when any new final regulations will go into effect under Section 316(b).” EPA should not burden New Hampshire electric customers with the costs associated with regulation that is not legally in effect.

Finally, the Obama Administration and EPA have shown disregard for New Hampshire’s residents by scheduling this public hearing in the midst of one of our state’s worst storm related electric outages. At a time when more than 40,000 New Hampshire businesses and families are suffering through an extended period without basic electric services due to the recent snow storm, and our state is relying on PSNH to devote all of its resources to the restoration effort, the EPA has forced PSNH to divert resources away from the critical effort. Clearly, rescheduling this hearing would have been in the best interest of the people of New Hampshire.

The attempt to implement this crushing, job-killing federal mandate needs to stop now, and we call on the EPA to stop this absurd and outrageous assault on New Hampshire electric ratepayers.

Comment VII.1.2**AR-1119*****Bill Ohm, State Representative, Hillsborough 26, Representing South Nashua***

- EPA is asking NH taxpayers to spend \$112,000,000 on pollution mitigation. What is this pollution mitigation? Is this mercury that goes into the tissue of fish that we eat? Is this sulfur dioxide something that produces acid rain and harms the forest of the northeast? Is this \$112,000,000 for CO2? No to all those.
- What is it for? It is for clean, warm water. This is to mitigate warm clean water at a cost of \$112,000,000 to taxpayers of New Hampshire for the PSNH customers of my district in Nashua. That’s \$85. For every man, woman and child of New Hampshire to prevent warm clean water from going into the Merrimack River.
- I am very skeptical that this is an appropriate expense for the taxpayers...I urge the EPA to rescind this requirement of a thermal variance for the Bow Power Plant and indeed, grant Public Service New Hampshire the requested thermal variance so they can get down to the business of supplying low cost power to the taxpayers of New Hampshire.

Comment VII.1.3**AR-1119*****Don LeBrun, Representative from South Nashua, Ward 859***

- The EPA’s draft permit shows great disregard for our state’s economy and is a significant threat to jobs in our state. At a time when we’re doing everything we can to make New Hampshire more competitive and attractive to employers, the federal government is seeking to punish our residents and small businesses with higher electric rates through unnecessary regulation.

- New Hampshire already has among the highest energy costs in the nation. And this federal mandate will make these costs even higher and make it harder to expand our economy and grow good new jobs here.
- If the current administration is truly interested in helping create new jobs, it would stop—it would stop the over-zealous regulatory mandate immediately. We accept the fact that the Obama administration will not be assisting our country and allowing business to create new jobs. In New Hampshire, all we ask is that, it not actively work to prevent job growth here.
- ...I also object to the EPA attempting to burden New Hampshire electric customers with costly mandates that is based on regulations that have not been approved.
- ...it remains unavoidably uncertain at the present time when any new final regulations will go into effect under Section 316(b). The EPA should not burden New Hampshire electric customers with the cost associated with regulation that is not legally in effect.

Comment VII.1.4	AR-1119
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Timothy Twombly, State Representative, Nashua, New Hampshire, Hillsborough 25, Ward 7 in Nashua

- I would like you to allow the Public Service Company of New Hampshire to go ahead and not have to put this \$112,000,000 cooling tower in place.
- ...they already spent...something like \$400,000,000 to put a scrubber in place which is protecting our air quality. Public Service of New Hampshire is the only residential provider of electricity. I hope that they are not—that the Administration is not trying to put them out of business...

Comment VII.1.5	AR-1119
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Williams, Chichester, NH, Member of the Board of the Campaign for Ratepayers Rights

- While Ratepayers' Rights is very much concerned with electrical rates, we also think about the total electricity picture in terms of residues from generation, whether it is radioactive waste or...plants such as the Bow plant.
- Has anybody taken a good look at the total picture of costs involved for both capital improvements as well as...annual operating expenses?
- A few years ago...for the hearing on the...proposed Bow scrubber for the mercury emissions...there was no mention of an upcoming...improvement in the reduction of the hot water treatment that the Bow plant involved. And I wonder if there are any other capital projects that may be proposed in the next five or ten years that we should think about.
- If the Legislature has full information about the total costs involved with the scrubber, and this thermal treatment, and possibly other things, then they might have made a different decision than just giving the Public Service Company a blank check to go ahead and build the scrubber no matter what it costs. Because then we get locked into the idea of...now can't shut down the Bow plant, because we've spent so much money [on] it. We have to keep it going...and then we have to spend some incremental money still using so much coal.

Comment VII.1.6**AR-1066**

David A. Fink, President of Pan Am Railways, N. Billerica, Massachusetts

On behalf of Pan Am Railways (PAR), I write today to express my concern with the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) recent National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) draft permit for Merrimack Station in Bow, New Hampshire.

PAR owns and operates over 1500 miles of railroad in six states and as a result regularly interacts with numerous federal and state environmental agencies. Through these frequent interactions, it has become apparent that the most beneficial outcome of any business development efforts take into account both the environmental and economic impacts of such development. PAR has been fortunate to find federal and state regulators who recognize the need for balancing economic benefits with environmental impacts and in each instance PAR has worked with those regulators to address their concerns, including several instances where regulators do not have jurisdiction over PAR operations.

PAR has been advised of the conditions that the proposed EPA NPDES permit would impose on the operations of the Bow power plant and would respectfully submit that those conditions are contrary to the delicate balance that is necessary between private development and government regulation that is imperative to ensure that the needs of both sides are met. Furthermore, in these difficult economic times it is critical that government and private industry work together to remove uncertainty and encourage economic growth, and the current draft NPDES permit for the Bow plan does not appear to meet either of these goals.

While it would seem that PAR has little interest in this issue, in reality PAR does have a vested interest in the continuation of operations of the Bow plant. PAR's rail line to the Bow plant provides the only freight service in New Hampshire from PAR in Massachusetts and the newly formed Pan Am Southern LLC. Should the Bow plant cease or curtail operations due to the proposed NPDES permit conditions, then the economics of sustaining a main line of over 50 miles would be tenuous at best.

Given the importance of the Bow plant for providing economically competitive power option to New Hampshire users, as well as the economic benefits that flow from the plant's operation, PAR would respectfully request that EPA reconsider the conditions that have been proposed in the draft NPDES permit for the Bow power plant.

EPA Response to Section VII.1 Comments:

EPA appreciates the commenters concerns about the cost of installing closed cycle cooling at Merrimack Station. In Attachment D of the 2011 Fact Sheet, EPA provides a detailed determination showing that PSNH had not demonstrated that its thermal discharges had caused "no prior appreciable harm" to the balanced indigenous population (BIP) of the Hooksett Pool. Therefore, EPA concluded that closed cycle cooling technology was necessary to protect the

BIP. However, over the last six years Merrimack Station's operational profile has changed, from that of a baseload facility to that of an intermittent, seasonal (winter/summer) generator and the current owner, Granite Shore Power, has indicated that it expects to continue to operate in this reduced manner for the foreseeable future. This is the result of lower prevailing prices for natural gas having rendered older, less efficient coal-burning plants, such as Merrimack Station, less competitive within New England relative to natural gas-burning plants.

Based on more recent fisheries studies and information submitted to EPA, as discussed in Chapter II of this document, the current extent of the thermal discharge does not appear to be causing, and likely will not cause going forward, appreciable harm to the BIP. Subsequently, the Agency determined that permit limits designed to maintain the current operating conditions provide reasonable assurance of the protection and propagation of the BIP. Therefore, EPA has concluded that a variance can be authorized pursuant to a CWA § 316(a) and that closed cycle cooling is not warranted at this time. As a result, the costs associated with cooling tower technology at Merrimack Station will not affect rate payers going forward. These new, variance-based permit limits based on the current operating conditions at the plant are discussed in Chapter II of this document. In addition, requirements related to the Station's cooling water intake structure, pursuant to CWA 316(b) are also discussed in detail Chapter III this document.

2.0 Concerns About Mercury and Sending FGD Wastewater to POTWs

Comment VII.2.1	AR-1119
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Kenneth Colburn, Stonyfield Farm

- My second concern is related to the fate of mercury itself...mercury is a persistent bioaccumulative toxin...just a little bit is not safe, because little bits build up over time in the food chain and become big bits and harmful and neurotoxic to developing fetuses.
- The Merrimack River is a TMDL limited river; the river is already maxed out for mercury. And that means it can accept no more under federal provisions. Hence the importance of the stringent draft permit conditions that you have included.
- I would like to ask you also include equally stringent near term constraints because, you see, the scrubber removes sulfur. And in the process, it also captures the majority of the mercury.
- Some of that mercury winds up in the scrubber wastewater. If that wastewater is not subject to comprehensive and thorough zero discharge treatment at the plant, but is instead shipped elsewhere, probably to municipal publicly owned treatment works...and because mercury then adheres to the solids in the treatment process, some of those treatment works incinerate their solids as a way to dispose of them. That means that the mercury that is with the solids that are then incinerated is readmitted, PSNH's coal mercury is readmitted. It is just being emitted out of a different stack...under those conditions...we didn't accomplish a whole lot in terms of mercury reductions.

Comment VII.2.2	AR-1119
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Linda Rauter, Chichester, New Hampshire

- I am also extremely concerned about the amount of mercury discharged by the plant. There is absolutely no question that mercury is a toxic substance and it is falling indiscriminately into our sewers and every water body. This is dangerous to all life and must be stopped.

Comment VII.2.3**AR-1119**

Tom Irwin, Director, New Hampshire Office of the Conservation Law Foundation - Joint Statement of Conservation Law Foundation, the Appalachian Mountain Club, Conservation New Hampshire, New Hampshire Audubon, Environment New Hampshire, the New Hampshire Chapter of the Sierra Club, Clean Water Action, and the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests

- While we strongly support EPA's intent to require the construction of a modern, closed cycle cooling system, we are greatly disappointed with the draft permit's failure to limit the power plant's discharge of mercury to zero. The State of New Hampshire and the EPA have determined that the Merrimack River already violates state water quality standards for mercury.
- Because it is a biocumulative and persistent neurotoxin, even small amounts of mercury discharges build up over time in fish threatening people, other mammals and birds that consume fish from the river. ...as a result, no amount of mercury discharge into this already impaired water is safe.
- ...PSNH previously informed the New Hampshire Site Evaluation Committee, in a 2009 hearing on its installation of a wet flue gas desulfurization scrubber, that the scrubber wastewater treatment system, PSNH was constructing, would not discharge any mercury wastewater to the Merrimack River.
- We strongly urge EPA to amend its Draft Permit to require zero liquid discharge to prevent further pollution of the river with mercury, selenium, and other toxic pollutants.

Comment VII.2.4**AR-1119**

Catherine Corkery, New Hampshire Sierra Club

- The concern we do have...the wastewater treatment with the effort to take the mercury out of the smoke stack only to be going out to the outfall pipe into the river is something we asked the EPA to regulate...the Merrimack River is maxed out on mercury. And there should be no more allowable mercury added to the river, or the other pollutants.
- ...adding more pollution into the Merrimack River through the wastewater treatment facility is...a step in the wrong direction. And we ask that EPA reexamine that and put tougher standards in. (She references mercury studies and EPA tells her that if she would send them electronically, they would be very helpful.)

Comment VII.2.5**AR-991 (also AR-1061)**

Environmental Organizations: Conservation Law Foundation, Environment New Hampshire, New Hampshire Sierra Club, Conservation New Hampshire, Appalachian Mountain Club, New Hampshire Audubon Society, Clean Water Action, and the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests

While we strongly support the EPA’s intent to require the construction of a modern closed-cycle cooling system, we are greatly disappointed with the draft permit’s failure to limit the power plant’s discharge of mercury to zero. The State of New Hampshire and EPA have determined that the Merrimack River already violates state water quality standards for mercury. Because it is a bioaccumulative and persistent neurotoxin, even small amounts of mercury discharges build up over time in fish, threatening people, other mammals, and birds that consume fish from the river. As a result, no amount of mercury discharged into this already-impaired waterbody is safe. Indeed, PSNH previously informed the New Hampshire Site Evaluation Committee, in a 2009 hearing on its installation of a wet flue gas desulfurization scrubber, that the scrubber wastewater treatment system PSNH was constructing would not discharge any mercury-laden wastewater to the Merrimack River. EPA’s Fact Sheet (Attachment E, page 5) appropriately acknowledges that PSNH designed, financed and constructed the new Merrimack Station wastewater treatment system without first discussing with EPA whether it would meet the standards required under the Clean Water Act. We strongly urge EPA to amend its draft permit to require zero-liquid-discharge to prevent further pollution of the river with mercury, selenium, and other toxic pollutants.

EPA Response to Section VII.2 Comments:

EPA acknowledges the commenters’ concerns regarding mercury potentially being discharged from Merrimack Station and Merrimack Station’s shipment of flue gas desulfurization (FGD) waste to local publicly owned treatment facilities (“POTWs”). EPA notes that discharges of FGD wastewater are not authorized by the Final Permit, so to the extent that these comments relate to direct discharges of FGD wastewater (with mercury) into the Merrimack River, those comments are no longer relevant. See Chapter VIII, Section 1 of this document for a more detailed discussion of FGD wastewater.

Some commenters also identified concerns with shipping FGD wastewater off-site to local POTWs. EPA’s Response to Section 2 Comments in Chapter VIII of this document provide a full discussion of the facility’s practice of shipping FGD wastewater to POTWs and address such concerns. In short, however, the facility’s decision and practice of sporadically hauling FGD wastewater off-site is not covered by or regulated under this NPDES permit, and instead would be covered by the pretreatment programs authorized at each specific POTW accepting indirect discharges. Based on the pretreatment standards for the Steam Electric Category promulgated as part of EPA’s 2015 National Rulemaking, *see* 40 CFR § 423.16, all POTW’s that receive indirect discharges from a categorical industrial user like Merrimack Station must assure that all wastewater meets the applicable National Categorical Pretreatment Standards. Thus, any FGD

wastewater trucked to a POTW must meet the requirements of 40 CFR § 423.16(e) for existing sources, including limits on arsenic, mercury, selenium, and nitrate/nitrite as nitrogen beginning November 1, 2020.

3.0 General Comments in Support of Closed Cycle Cooling at Merrimack

Comment VII.3.1	AR-1119
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Tom Irwin, Director, New Hampshire Office of the Conservation Law Foundation - Joint Statement of Conservation Law Foundation, the Appalachian Mountain Club, Conservation New Hampshire, New Hampshire Audubon, Environment New Hampshire, the New Hampshire Chapter of the Sierra Club, Clean Water Action, and the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests

- We appreciate that EPA is addressing the harmful impacts on the Merrimack River that occur as a result of the massive water intake and heated and chemical wastewater discharges associated with the coal plant's obsolete water cooling system.
- We are frustrated that 14 years have elapsed since the expiration of the current permit, we commend EPA for requiring PSNH to ensure that Merrimack Station is operating in a way that is both protective of the fragile river ecosystem and in compliance with the Clean Water Act, a law that is essential to protecting the health of New Hampshire's natural environment, economy, and communities.
- We fully support EPA...requiring the installation at Merrimack Station of a modern closed cycle cooling system that will nearly eliminate the harmful impacts associated with the power plant's current system. Impacts, that, as EPA acknowledges, have resulted over the plant's lifetime in a 94 percent decline of species in that part of the Merrimack River.
- The current method of cooling the plant pulls living creatures into the system, crushing, mutilating and suffocating them. It traps fish and other aquatic life against the screens, covering pipes that pull water into the system injuring or killing them, and then subjects the river and its aquatic life to the further stresses of heated wastewater discharges.
- The upgrades to Merrimack Station that EPA is requiring are long overdue. Installing a modern, closed cycle cooling system and operating it year round will decrease the plant's discharge of heated water by nearly 100 percent.
- ...because it will not require the same volume of water from the river, the upgraded system will dramatically reduce the loss of adult fish, fish larvae and fish eggs, that today are getting sucked into the structures and killed.

Comment VII.3.2	AR-1119
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Catherine Corkery, New Hampshire Sierra Club

- The New Hampshire Sierra club supports the permit in requiring the closed cycle water facility. It is a huge improvement from what is there now.
- A 90 plus improvement on reducing the water intake. The Merrimack River has been abused and used and dumped in—dumped on for too long. And the other abusers...have been

eliminated. And now we just have the Merrimack Station here in Bow as one of the few polluters left...it is a simple solution with the thermal pollution.

- Secondly, it is such an improvement with the wildlife. We really commend you for that.

Comment VII.3.3	AR-1119
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Jeff Daly, Nashua, New Hampshire, Member of Lower Merrimack River Local River Management Advisory Committee (LAC) and outside member of Sierra Club

- The same thing with the coolant. There are air cooled heat exchanging systems that are totally enclosed, do not require any water discharge once they are shut up, other than some make up for the regular relief valve blow outs that take place in any power plant. It doesn't, matter where you go.
- Also, the hot air that is driven through those air cooled heat exchangers can then be used to reheat the combustion air used to burn in the boilers. You don't have to pump it up into the atmosphere. Go down to Manchester and look at the Granite Ridge Plant, which is an over peaking plant. And look at the steam that comes out of their cooler. The other day we measured it. It is 6000 feet plume of steam rising into the atmosphere. We went to the other side of Stonyfield and the gentleman from Stonyfield may be able to confirm this, it was raining a mist of rain. Are we wanting the same thing, if you have an *open* closed loop system rather than a *closed* closed loop system?
- This should have been addressed in your permit. I agree, we have to lower the temperature. But there is technology around. It's been around for years. In Europe, they have been using air cooled heat exchanging systems for 35 years. It's been around in the United States for 20+ years. I've worked on four of them.
- You mentioned the Everett unit down in Boston. That works very well. You don't see tons of steam pouring out into the atmosphere there.
- We've got to look and utilize the best technology. EPA is doing a good job. But you've got to go out. You've got to ask for help...you can go to round tables and ask for people to come up with suggestions. Ask PSNH to be part of it. Have them have some of the input. I know some of the directors of PSNH. They would be very willing to open up and say, hey, let's sit down and let's hear from engineers. Let's hear from people who've got ideas.
- The destruction of our environment, especially, the Merrimack River cannot continue. Heat is one of the killers that changes the environment dramatically. Whether it is in the water or in the atmosphere.
- We can't pump out close 1,000,000,000,000 BTUs into the atmosphere of any sort. We've got to try to recover it. And one way is, you take an air cooled heat exchanger, take the air from that and use it as pre-combustion air rather than outside cold air, irrespective of what time of year it is.
- ...this thing about the US Army Corps of Engineers, please, revisit it. Re-look at it. Because if you're saying we've got to look at restructuring, and you even say it here, well, the next time the permit is revised, why next time, why not say zero.

Comment VII.3.4**AR-1119*****Frederick S. Tuttle, Jr.***

- I have paddled that Hooksett pool many, many times. I have rarely seen much wildlife on that pool. And I believe it's simply because of the change in thermal. I wish to support the strongest possible controls on thermal output from that power plant.
- My strongest concerns...revolve around the wildlife of the river...to me, the fish populations are almost the smallest part of the overall equation...what do the fish depend upon to eat, what depends on the fish to feed them. We've got bald eagles...osprey...half a dozen species of herons...otter...weasels...beavers, herons, fishermen and many other things that we don't even know about that are part of the food web of that area. This to me is the more important aspect of why we should have control over those thermal outputs. Simply because we don't know what we're doing to the food web. We don't know what we're doing to the environment web in a lot of cases.

Comment VII.3.5**AR-1119*****Kenneth Colburn, Stonyfield Farm***

- I interpret by its blog that PSNH does not agree with the EPA draft permit. And this mystifies me because it probably relates to cost.
- Back in 2008, when the cost of the scrubber project and the turbine enhancements went from \$250,000,000 to \$457,000,000, an increase of nearly \$200,000,000, that was good news. PSNH supported that...pushed it very, very hard...suggested in terms of labor...that it was good for jobs. So I am confused why, if you can add another \$200,000,000 and that's a good thing and you can rate base another \$200,000,000 even though you had cheaper cost options on the market or in a different plant replacement, and that's good for jobs, why another \$100,000,000 so a total of \$300,000,000 isn't better.
- PSNH chose to do that...they knew that this permit process was coming up. So, surely as a public utility, it planned, it has an obligation to plan for this kind of permit determination.
- So, I'm sure it was aware of the risk of a closed loop cooling system. Indeed, I assisted in the drafting of a compendium of issues associated with this plant issued in late 2008 in which this issue was called out and the cost estimates were approximately in the range that we have described tonight. That, having been called out also was not a surprise.
- ...fundamentally my confusion rests over the issues that PSNH can't argue about costs. It can't argue about jobs. And it can't argue about surprise. So, I'm not sure why we are here and why they are opposing.

Comment VII.3.6**AR-861, AR-862*****Josh Nelson, Credo Action Campaign Manager***

Josh Nelson submitted comments made by over 1000 individuals across New Hampshire and Massachusetts through Credo Action, an online social change network where activists go to sign petitions. Petitioners also included others from across the United States including Arizona, California, Florida, Idaho, Hawaii, Maine, Montana, Nevada, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Vermont, and Washington, D.C. All the individuals submitted the following text provided by Credo, with some adding their own brief personal comments:

The fish kills and water usage associated with the Merrimack Coal Plant are unacceptable. As someone who lives near the river and cares about the local environment, I urge you to require Public Service of New Hampshire to implement a closed-cycle cooling system at its Merrimack coal plant.

Comment VII.3.7	AR-991 (also AR-1061)
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Environmental Organizations: Conservation Law Foundation, Environment New Hampshire, New Hampshire Sierra Club, Conservation New Hampshire, Appalachian Mountain Club, New Hampshire Audubon Society, Clean Water Action, and the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests

We fully support EPA at long last requiring the installation at Merrimack Station of a modern “closed-cycle” cooling system that will nearly eliminate the harmful impacts associated with the power plant’s current system – impact that, as EPA acknowledges, have resulted over the plant’s lifetime in a 94 percent decline of species in that part of the Merrimack River. The current method of cooling the plant pulls living creatures into the system, crushing, mutilating and suffocating them, and traps fish and other aquatic life against the screens covering pipes that pull water into the system, injuring or killing them, and then subjects the river and its aquatic life to the further stresses of heated wastewater discharges.

The upgrades to Merrimack Station that EPA is requiring are long overdue. Installing a modern closed-cycle cooling system and operating it year round will decrease the plant’s discharge of heated water by nearly 100 percent. In addition, because it will not require the same volume of water from the river, the upgraded system will dramatically reduce the loss of fish, fish larvae and fish eggs that today are getting sucked into the structures and killed.

EPA Response to Section VII.3 Comments:

EPA acknowledges and appreciates all the commenters that expressed their support of EPA’s conclusion that closed-cycle cooling was appropriate and necessary to protect the ecology of the Merrimack River. EPA has considered the extensive comments it has received on the Draft Permit and the spirit of environmental stewardship expressed in these comments. EPA agrees that the Merrimack River is an important public resource.

Back in 2001, EPA determined that PSNH had not demonstrated that its thermal discharges had caused “no prior appreciable harm” to the balanced indigenous population (BIP) of the Hooksett

Pool. Therefore, EPA concluded that closed cycle cooling technology was necessary to protect the BIP. However, over the last six years Merrimack Station's operational profile has changed, from that of a baseload facility to that of an intermittent, seasonal (winter/summer) generator and the current owner, Granite Shore Power, has indicated that it expects to continue to operate in this reduced manner for the foreseeable future. This is the result of lower prevailing prices for natural gas having rendered older, less efficient coal-burning plants, such as Merrimack Station, less competitive within New England relative to natural gas-burning plants.

Based on more recent fisheries studies and information submitted to EPA, as discussed in Chapter II of this document, the current extent of the thermal discharge does not appear to be causing, and likely will not cause going forward, appreciable harm to the BIP. Subsequently, the Agency determined that permit limits designed to maintain the current operating conditions provide reasonable assurance of the protection and propagation of the BIP. Therefore, EPA has concluded that a variance can be authorized pursuant to a CWA § 316(a) and that closed cycle cooling is not warranted at this time. These new, variance-based permit limits based on the current operating conditions at the plant, are discussed in detail in Chapter II of this document. In addition, requirements related to the Station's cooling water intake structure, pursuant to CWA 316(b) are also discussed in detail Chapter III this document.

Given that the above comments do not include specific recommendations or objections concerning the Draft Permit's limitations or other requirements, no specific changes have been made to the Final Permit as a result of these comments. EPA acknowledges that there may be objections by these commenters to the Final Permit, as it does not require closed-cycle cooling technology. The basis for this change is fully explained in Chapter II of this Response to Comments document.

4.0 General Comments in Support of the Draft Permit

4.1 Comments Received by Letter

Comment VII.4.1.1	AR-1059
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Judi Lindsey, Candia, New Hampshire

Thank you for protecting NH's waters from dirty coal polluters like Public Service Company of NH's Merrimack Station coal plant in Bow. It has been destroying the fish and other living creatures in the Merrimack River for many decades. The Merrimack River provides drinking water and recreation for communities in this NH and MA watershed.

I support your new draft National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit for this Merrimack (River) Station coal-fired power plant in Bow. It is past time they installed modern, efficient technologies to reduce water use and stop killing so many fish. I love to kayak the Merrimack River as well!

Comment VII.4.1.2**AR-1060*****Sylvia S. Field, Lebanon, New Hampshire***

I want to thank you for your action protecting New Hampshire waters from the Public Service Company of NH, whose polluting coal plan in Bow has been killing fish and other creatures in the Merrimack River for many decades. I support whole-heartedly your new Draft National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permit for this plant. It's high time new technologies are installed.

Comment VII.4.1.3**AR-1062*****Gary S. Chag, Sanbornville, New Hampshire***

Thank you for protecting New Hampshire's waters from dirty coal polluters like the Merrimack Station coal plant in Bow, NH. I support your New Draft National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permit for the Merrimack Station coal fired plant in Bow. It is time they installed efficient technologies to reduce water use and killing wildlife.

Comment VII.4.1.4**AR-1063*****Russell, Perkins, New Hampshire***

I understand the EPA is considering issuing an NPDES permit for PSNH's Merrimack Station coal burning plant in Bow, New Hampshire. I was amazed to find out that the plant didn't already have a water recirculation system and uses hundreds of millions of gallons of fresh river water every day. This kills millions of fish and releases warm water into the river. It is about time PSNH installed a modern water recirculation system and had to operate under the appropriate safeguarding permits.

Comment VII.4.1.5**AR-1068, AR-1119 (also read at public hearing)*****Linda Rauter, Chichester, New Hampshire***

My family and I have lived in the greater Concord area for about 38 years. Concord with its beautiful Merrimack River has been the center of most of our activities over the years. Not too long ago before we arrived, the Merrimack was so polluted that one could not even safely swim in it. I understand that now, it is safe for swimming, boating and for wildlife. Because of the Bow Power Plant, I personally believe that only the area above the plant is safe for water activities. Sadly, extremely polluted discharge water from the plant continues to foul the river below it. Warmer water temperatures of the discharge also affect life in the river below the plant. In addition, it is my understanding that the 287 MILLION gallons of water withdrawn every day by the plant results in horrible deaths for whatever creatures may be in that water. A short distance upriver along the Forrest [*sic*] Society Conversation area, I have noted turtles, mink, muskrats,

otter, and water birds in addition to the fish that live in the river. It is extremely disturbing to imagine these creatures being sucked into the plant turbines or drowned on the intake screens.

The right thing to do is drastically limit the amount of water withdraw by the river and to make Certain that whatever water is discharged if first cooled and cleaned. I am also extremely concerned about the amount of mercury discharged by the plant. There is absolutely no question that mercury is a toxic substance, and it is falling indiscriminately into our soils and every water body. This is dangerous to all life and must be stopped.

Comment VII.4.1.6	AR-1070
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Lower Merrimack River Local Advisory Committee

The Lower Merrimack River Local Advisory Committee was created in 1990 after the Lower Merrimack was designated a protected river in the State of NH. As a designated river, the Lower Merrimack is protected under RSA 483; administered by the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (NH DES) Rivers Management and Protection Program.

The Lower Merrimack River Local Advisory Committee (LMRLAC) has reviewed the draft permit for the PSNH Merrimack Station in Bow, NH and offers the following comments:

The LAC supports the approval of the draft permit as written as it will be beneficial to the river. The draft permit is consistent with the efforts undertaken by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Salmon Restoration Program.

Comment VII.4.1.7	AR-1069
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Janis Porter, Hampton, New Hampshire

Thank you for protecting New Hampshire's waters from dirty coal polluters like Public Service Company of New Hampshire's Merrimack Station coal plant in Bow, NH. It has been destroying the fish and other living creatures in the Merrimack River for many decades. The Merrimack River provides drinking water for communities throughout New Hampshire and Massachusetts. I support your new Draft National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit for the Merrimack Station coal-fired power plant in Bow, New Hampshire. It is past time they installed modern, efficient technologies to reduce water use and stop killing so many fish!

Comment VII.4.1.8	AR-1071
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Karen Campbell, Derry, New Hampshire

Thank you for protecting New Hampshire's waters from dirty coal polluters like Public Service of New Hampshire's Merrimack station coal plan in Bow, NH. It has been destroying the fish and other living creates in the Merrimack River for many decades by withdrawing up to 287

million gallons of water from the river every day killing billions of fish and polluting the water. The Merrimack River provides drinking water for communities throughout New Hampshire and Massachusetts. I support your new Draft National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit for the Merrimack Station coal-fired power plant in Bow, New Hampshire since the permit would reduce the amount of water the coal plant uses by 90% and protect technologies to reduce water use and stop killing so many fish.

Comment VII.4.1.9	AR-1072
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Steven E. Opre

I am writing to express strong support for the EPA’s proposal to require the installation of a modern closed-cycle cooling water system at the Merrimack Station, as described in its draft NPDES permit.

Comment VII.4.1.10	AR-1073
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Ruth Heden, Milford, New Hampshire

I am writing to express strong support for the EPA’s proposal to require the installation of a modern closed-cycle cooling water system at the Merrimack Station, as described in its draft NPDES permit.

I am concerned both because of the damage to wildlife, but the pollution issues are of greater concern to me. Discharging mercury causes so many problems, many that we know about especially as many communities rely on rivers for their drinking water – both other problems we discover as we study the issues. It’s cost effective to deal with the problem with prevention – than to pay for the problems later: healthcare issues, impaired educational capacities.

Comment VII.4.1.11	AR-1074
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Alisha DiMasi

I am writing to express strong support for the EPA’s proposal to require the installation of a modern closed-cycle cooling water system at the Merrimack station, as described in its draft NPDES permit.

Comment VII.4.1.12	AR-1075
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Nancy Reiss, East Kingston, NH

Thanks for protecting NH’s waters from dirty coal polluters like Public Service Company of NH’s Merrimack Station coal plant in Bow, NH, which has been destroying fish and other creatures in the Merrimack River for many decades. This river provides drinking water and recreation for communities in this NH and MA watershed.

I support your new draft National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit for this Merrimack Station coal-fired power plant. The company must be made to install modern, efficient technologies to reduce water use, stop pollution, and prevent fish kill.

Comment VII.4.1.13	AR-1076
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Barbara Fortune, Effingham, NH

Please help protect the Merrimack River from PSNH's polluting withdrawal + discharge of river water for Merrimack Station in Bow, NH. It is unacceptable that aquatic life is being destroyed and that a public water supply is being so degraded. It's time for a closed-cycle system. I support the NPDES permit. It is long overdue!

Comment VII.4.1.14	AR-1077
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Marlies G. Coronado, Manchester, NH

Thank you for protecting New Hampshire's waters from dirty coal Polluters like Public Service Company of New Hampshire's Merrimack Station coal plant in Bow, NH. It has been destroying the fish and other living creatures in the Merrimack River for many decades. The Merrimack River provides drinking water for communities throughout New Hampshire and Massachusetts. I support your New Draft National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit for the Merrimack Station coal-fired power plant in Bow, New Hampshire. It is past time they installed modern, efficient technologies to reduce water use and stop killing so many fish.

Comment VII.4.1.15	AR-991 (also AR-1061)
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Environmental Organizations: Conservation Law Foundation, Environment New Hampshire, New Hampshire Sierra Club, Conservation New Hampshire, Appalachian Mountain Club, New Hampshire Audubon Society, Clean Water Action, and the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests

To be clear, these comments should not be interpreted as support for the continued operation of PSNH's Merrimack Station coal-fired power plant. The plant is the single largest source of greenhouse gas emissions in New Hampshire, perpetuates the adverse health impacts associated with burning coal, and cannot generate power cost-effectively in comparison to more efficient power plants operating in New England today. No matter what PSNH spends to upgrade the facility, it will not be able to turn this 50-year-old plant into a desirable source of energy that benefits the people of New Hampshire and New England. Nonetheless, as long as this plant remains in operation, it *must*, as a matter of law, comply with the Clean Water Act.

We commend EPA for finally addressing Merrimack Station's outdated and environmentally harmful cooling system, and we urge EPA to amend its draft permit to require the elimination of

any mercury discharge from the plant. We request that EPA proceed expeditiously with the finalization of its draft permit.

EPA Response to Section VII.4.1 Comments:

EPA acknowledges and appreciates the above comments reflecting support for the Draft Permit. EPA has considered the extensive comments it has received on the Draft Permits and the spirit of environmental stewardship expressed in these comments. Further, EPA agrees that the Merrimack River is an important public resource. EPA has applied the appropriate standards of the Clean Water Act in establishing the terms of the Final Permit. See response to Section VII.3 comments above. Given that the above comments do not include specific recommendations or objections concerning the Draft Permit's limitations or other requirements, no specific changes have been made to the Final Permit as a result of these comments. EPA acknowledges that there may be objections by these commenters to the Final Permit, as it does not require closed-cycle cooling technology. The basis for this change is fully explained in Chapter II of this Response to Comments document.

4.2 Comments Made at November 3, 2011 Public Hearing

Comment VII.4.2.1	AR-1119
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Catherine Goldwater, Hollis, New Hampshire, Member of the New Hampshire Green Coalition and Sierra Club of New Hampshire and national Sierra Club

- I have lived in Hollis for 30 years, raised two kids there.
- Decades ago, Marion Stoddard began to notice the pollution in the Nashua River that, at the time, was so visible...the factories were discharged into the river so that you could look and see yellow foam...it was almost like plastic or blue. The river was colored. And it was just being treated like a garbage dump.
- Now the kinds of pollution are not visible. And yet, we know the harm of mercury, arsenic, and other chemicals in minute amounts...we know there is a lot of mercury in the fish in New Hampshire lakes, mostly from the air. And that's not all from the Bow plant. It also comes from Ohio and drops into our lakes.
- We have been told to eat very few fish from the lakes...maybe one a month is safe, none if you are pregnant...
- ...I am concerned about these chemicals and how they are hurting people and animals.
- A fact Sheet...from Sierra Club indicated that some of the Merrimack water downstream is used for drinking water in Lowell. And I hope that's properly cleaned if it is really being used for drinking water.
- I also have a question which I hope to get answered someday, that the water that is heated, and it goes over the dam and then gradually mixes so it cools down, but, it stays warmer, I'm sure it was 30, 40 years ago. And I wonder what the effect of that heated water is on the

growth of bacteria or what kinds of insects may be more common because the water is warmer.

- PSNH just invested in those new scrubbers to reduce the sulfur, but not remove all of it, I don't believe, reduce the mercury. And we know, for that reason that this PSNH is likely to be around for quite a while.
- ...I fully support and am in favor the EPA draft to make it as strong as possible.

Comment VII.4.2.2	AR-1119
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Jerry Curran, Chair of New Hampshire Chapter of the Sierra Club

- Thank the EPA for starting this whole process and I am struck by the words of “warm, clean water” coming out of the Merrimack Station power plant. I don't know how many of you have actually seen that power plant. But, terms like warm, clean water coming from the power plant, it seems a little odd.
- I think it will provide jobs. If we...leave it as it is, there will be jobs for healthcare providers. If we were to keep this power plant operating, which we don't agree with...we've got the third highest asthma rate in the country. We've got 18,000 children who suffer from asthma in New Hampshire and we are an EPA non-attainment area for ozone. And that exacerbates the 18,000 children with asthma. So even in the best situation, we if keep the plant running when there are so many other ways to produce power other than with coal in a 40 year old power plant, and keeping it running is really not a great option.
- If we were to keep it running, cleaning the warm clean water from the effluent would be a good idea.
- ...the slurry from the scrubbers, all of that water will end up back in the Merrimack with other chemicals, along with mercury in the Merrimack, and that's even water that is drinking water for Nashua, as I understand. It just seems kind of hard to call that warm, clean water.
- I do support the denial of the thermal variance...I would like to thank EPA for the work they are doing and it is overdue.

Comment VII.4.2.3	AR-1119
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Marsh Feigl, Concord, New Hampshire

- I've paddled on the...Hooksett Pool probably upwards of 50 times...I paddle there in the winter...I don't paddle there the rest of the year because...I just have other spots to go. But...we paddle there in January, February, and March because there is open water...it's a great place to paddle...because everywhere else in New Hampshire is locked up. There is nowhere else to go. But it's also very strange and weird...to be in that river and to look upstream from the power plant and see this much ice just locked up as I suppose it should be. And below the power plant, all the way down to...the Hooksett Dam, or down by the Hooksett District Court, it's probably three quarters of a mile, generally open water the whole way.... lots of ducks. I view lots of fish...lots of bald eagles...it's a strange and odd thing to see, and clearly unnatural. But I will leave it to others to decide whether it's a good thing or a bad thing. But, it's...not a natural thing, that's for darn sure.

Comment VII.4.2.4**AR-1119**

Tom Irwin, Director, New Hampshire Office of the Conservation Law Foundation - Joint Statement of Conservation Law Foundation, the Appalachian Mountain Club, Conservation New Hampshire, New Hampshire Audubon, Environment New Hampshire, the New Hampshire Chapter of the Sierra Club, Clean Water Action, and the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests

- EPA, in its permit fact sheet, appropriately acknowledges that PSNH designed, financed and constructed the new Merrimack Station wastewater treatment system without first discussing with EPA whether it would meet the standards required under the Clean Water Act.
- To be clear, these comments should not be interpreted as support for the continued operation for PSNH's Merrimack Station coal fired power plant. The plant is the single largest source of greenhouse gas emissions in New Hampshire, perpetuates the adverse health impacts associated with burning coal and cannot generate power cost effectively in comparison to more efficient power plants operating in New England today.
- No matter what PSNH spends to upgrade this facility, it will not be able to turn this 50-year-old plant into a desirable source of energy that benefits the people of New Hampshire and New England.
- ...as long as this plant remains in operation, it must, as a matter of law, comply with the Clean Water Act.
- We commend EPA for finally addressing the Merrimack Station's outdated and environmentally harmful cooling system. And we urge EPA to amend its Draft Permit to require the elimination of any mercury discharge from the plant.
- We request that EPA proceed expeditiously with the finalization of this draft permit.
- ...our understanding (is) that the Department of Environmental Services has authorized for wastewater—municipal wastewater treatment plants to accept indirect discharges of scrubber wastewater from Merrimack Station. Specifically, we understand that the city of Concord is authorized to accept up to 25,000 gallons per day of the scrubber wastewater, that the city of Manchester and the towns of Hooksett and Allenstown are each authorized to accept up to 100,000 gallons per day of scrubber waste water. We are concerned about the potential impacts, not only to the Merrimack River, but...with the impacts of mercury from this wastewater absorbing into solids and ending up either on the land or potentially even incinerate. So it is an issue of concern we hope EPA will closely address.

Comment VII.4.2.5**AR-1119**

Frederick S. Tuttle, Jr.

- In 19 years, I've seen the effluent coming down the river...coming out of the stacks. I just hate the thought of seeing more yellow smoke coming out of those stacks. And if it doesn't come out of the stacks, it's going to come in the water. I don't want to have to paddle in that water.

- ...my drinking water is from Hooksett. ...Hooksett gets its drinking water...from wells, deep wells. Those wells are supplied by water in some way, shape or form from the river. I don't want to drink that water. But, at this point, it is filtered good. And we're able to drink it without getting too sick.
- ...I really want to stress that we need those controls. We need to put that river back to...as close to its normal running temperature as possible. Not only for us but for everything else that survives on that river.

Comment VII.4.2.6	AR-1119
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Jeff Daly, Nashua, New Hampshire, Member of Lower Merrimack River Local River Management Advisory Committee (LAC) and outside member of Sierra Club

- We spent—it went from \$250,000,000 to \$450,000,000. We now have a massive great chimney stack outside here. You've got a flue gas scrubbing system. And you say the technology does not exist to clean up the waste coming out of that.
- Within your own document, you talk about numerous outflows. Nowhere in there do you say, let's consolidate all this wastewater. Let's treat it in one place.
- I can take you to the Dow Chemical Plant in Midland, Michigan, and Freeport Texas where they take very toxic wastewater and they remove arsenic, cyanide, *thialysines* (phonetic), and mercuries. And they put the water back in their facility in Michigan cleaner than they take it out of Lake Michigan.
- The technology is there. And yet, the EPA has not addressed it in any of their paper work here. Other than on page 39, you talk about nitrogen. You talk about discharges of ammonia, nitrogen, and nitrogen can be treated to the depletion of a water body's dissolved oxygen levels. This can, in turn, cause a variety of adverse quality, water quality habitat effects.
- We all know dissolved oxygen's effect on the Gulf. Has the EPA been down there and allowed rehabilitation of the Gulf? No. We've been pouring, right now, in excess of 7,000,000 gallons of Corrects It 9572 (phonetic) into the Gulf because nobody wants to do remediation...What has that done? Reduced the dissolved oxygen content within the Gulf to a point where you've got vast areas that are dead.
- You can go off the coast of New Jersey, Toms River where the Seaver Geigy Company dumped materials.
- ...you talk about the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers is working on a dissolved oxygen model for the Merrimack River. Gentlemen, that model has been around for 35 years. Why are we now talking about a new model?
- You said the results of this modeling analysis could lead to the conclusion that nitrogen limits are needed. Why don't you just turn around and say zero. We've got the technology.

Comment VII.4.2.7	AR-1119
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Barbara Morris, Bow, New Hampshire

- I just moved to the Concord area from the beautiful and pristine Monadnock region of New Hampshire. Our lakes, our rivers, our streams are isolated from smoke stacks and highways.

I was so happy to find out about the society for the protection of New Hampshire forests conservation center that abuts the Merrimack River and does have access to the river for people, their dogs...just as recently...I found out just how polluted the Merrimack River is. And even worse, now that I'm finding out what's going on with the river from the Bow power station.

- I think you all need to reevaluate the technology that is available. Why does the Merrimack always have to learn and apply what is being done across the pond, no pun intended.
- There needs to be a lot more discussion and bringing in scientists and engineers, and authorities about putting the best system in because I don't think there is going to be a next time. I think this is the time. And the changes have to be made with the...best technology that is available.

Comment VII.4.2.8	AR-1119
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Woodworth Winmill, High School Student

- I was looking at (the original permit) and it was really confusing. Because one of the problems I get, limitations of the discharges. And it has the one column that is the average monthly discharge, and the column that is the daily maximum. But, almost all the pollutants are measured only on a per week basis which is confusing me. don't understand why—the chemistry of that or not. Why do you have a maximum, if you only measure the weekly content? What is the applicability of that?
- Basically, most toxic heavy metals are listed here. I mean, you've got a chromium and cadmium and arsenic and lead...and...the catchall category more or less of mercury and manganese. And there also was...various quality quantities. You've got the daily maximum of arsenic is 15 micrograms per liter. Which means if you're discharging thousands of gallons of water and that's fifteen micrograms per liter. And add to that...a meaningful amount and it had them at a macroscopic level which they—like the recoverable lead is 100 micrograms per liter...which was kind of a shock, 100 micrograms and you discharge thousands of gallons and that's pretty vague.
- If you look at the chlorides...you have 18,000 micrograms of chlorides, no...it's actually measured in milligrams. So, you have 18,000 milligrams, which corresponds to 18 grams per liter of chlorides, which is a significant amount of chlorides...especially if you're going to list thousand gallons again.
- But, it is also addressed the issue of pollutant...the metabolic rates of different fish but, in terms of water temperature, if you reduce the water temperature, you reduce the total saturation capacity of oxygen.
- So, if you had the top layer, which has the most aquatic life in it, reduce the amount of...the carbon dioxide could be dissolved in that for the aquatic plants to digest. And you would reduce the amount of oxygen that can be held in the top layer of water.
- If you had a region of...like a flow area of water, how it could affect the currents. And especially, trying to bring back salmon in northeastern rives. And if you have other water, moving fast, it'll make it more difficult for fish in general to travel upstream beyond actually getting killed by...the plant.

EPA Response to Section VII.4.2 Comments:

EPA acknowledges and appreciates that the individuals above attended and participated in the EPA public hearing on November 3, 2011 and provided testimony reflecting support for the Draft Permit. As with the extensive written comments we received, EPA appreciates the support and positive statements made at the hearing for the Draft Permit as well as the spirit of environmental stewardship expressed in each given testimony. EPA agrees that the Merrimack River is an important public resource and has applied the appropriate standards of the Clean Water Act in establishing the terms of the Final Permit for Merrimack Station. Given that the above comments do not include specific recommendations or objections concerning the Draft Permit's limitations or other requirements, no specific changes have been made to the Final Permit as a result of these comments.

Please see the response to Section VII.2 comments above regarding the Permittee's use of POTWs. With respect to a commenter's concern about mercury transported to POTWs and ending up in the Merrimack River, in solids or on land, any FGD wastewater that is trucked to POTWs will have undergone chemical precipitation and been subject to the facility's Enhanced Mercury and Arsenic Removal System (EMARS), which together remove mercury and other pollutants.

In addition, EPA found no reasonable potential for New Hampshire's water quality criteria for nitrogen to be exceeded. If results of quarterly ammonia nitrogen monitoring at Outfall 003 show that limits are needed, EPA can modify the permit to include them. EPA acknowledges that there may be objections by these commenters to the Final Permit, as it does not require closed-cycle cooling technology. The basis for this change is fully explained in Chapter II of this Response to Comments document.

5.0 General Comments in Opposition to the Draft Permit

Comment VII.5.1	AR-1119 and AR-1067
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Randy Herk, Northwood, NH

- ...to share my perspective on the EPA's recent Draft Permit regarding the impact the operation of the Merrimack Station is having on the health of the Merrimack River.
- Much of the focus of EPA's recent Draft Permit is on the plant's impact on the fish population. So, I think it is important, people like myself, who fish the river regularly share my experience.
- The Merrimack River has undergone some dramatic changes over the last decades, all of which are for the better. During my time fishing on the river, I have caught plenty of fish. Of course, all my fishing is catch and release so the fish go right back into the population.
- In addition to being a very active fishing spot, the Merrimack River is also home to many other types of wildlife. I have observed ducks, blue heron, bald eagles, minx, beavers, and weasels and other form of wildlife all actively enjoying the healthy waters and ecosystem of the Merrimack River.

- It is no secret that the Merrimack River is a great spot for fishing and wildlife. The river is normally fished by several bass boats and used by others looking to enjoy the outdoors.
- I was very grateful to PSNH for installing a community boat launch near the Merrimack Station allowing many others to enjoy the river and all it has to offer.
- ...it is my observation that the river is healthier and cleaner than it has ever been. My experience as a fisherman and my observation of so many others enjoying the river are a testament to that.

Comment VII.5.2**AR-1065 and AR-1119*****Rob Frye, Sandown, NH - Rocking Fishing and Hunting Expo***

A few credentials I would like to share:

1. Proud New Hampshire Resident and father of two with a loving wife
 2. Founder of Bubba Bassin since 1996
 3. President of the NHBass Federation from 2000-2006
 4. Board of Directors of NH Lakes Association from 2004-2005
 5. Founder/Owner of the Rockingham Fishing & Hunting Expo
 6. Bass Tournament Angler since 1993
 7. 1-time State Champion and 2-Time Angler of the Year
 8. Commercial salt-water angler for 3 years
 9. Hardware/Avid Angling Enthusiast
 10. And for work, I am a Principle Software Automation Engineer
- I personally fish all year round and have been fishing the Hooksett Pool of the Merrimack River since 1992 since I first owned a boat, almost 20 years now.
 - I fish the “Bow Power Plant” at least 6-12 times per year.
 - I have posted YouTube videos while fishing the BPP that you can view now. These were recorded a couple of years ago while fishing on Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year’s Eve weekends.
 - I can share with you from my own personal experience that the BPP is an incredible and productive fishery.
 - I have caught numerous lunkers (bass over 4 lbs.) both smallmouth and largemouth species every year.
 - I have many friends that have caught largemouth 7 to 8 lbs.
 - Recent tournament results are also strong arguments to support that the BPP is vibrant and healthy fishery.
 - There have been a few times I have gone fishing from my boat and caught over 50 bass.
 - Bass aren’t the only species that are numerous here.
 - I have caught Salmon and seen schools and schools of yellow perch, especially by the beaver hut
 - I have even brought and used my AquaView (Underwater camera) and been so impressed by the fish I see including the massive amounts of white suckers that thrive in the pool area.

- It is also the only place I know of in NH where you can fish from a boat all year round.
 - No other water body in the state allows this.
 - I don't winterize one of my boats just so I can use it during the winter months at our beloved BPP.
 - I've met many anglers at the ramp and on the water from NH, Maine, Massachusetts, and Vermont.

- I question a lot of the data collected for the slide show...I question a lot of that data...for one, you can't tell me where that data came from or who it came from.
- In the slide show only four fish were caught...I can bring you to places, I mean to that Bow Power Plant and catch sometimes 50 fish a day. And you can catch multiple species there.
- If you know where the dam is in that section, there is a ton of yellow perch in that area...I was very impressed by the amount of white suckers that are there.
- ...I question where you're getting your data...it looks like you guys are looking in the wrong place to be honest with you because it is an incredible fishery.
- This piece of water, this water body, it is the only place in New Hampshire where you can fish all year round from a boat. Because of the rest of the waters, you know, they are pretty much frozen or not accessible.
- And so if this closed loop system goes into place, it's going to be unfortunate because we're going to lose a resource which is the bass fishing.

EPA Response to Section VII.5 Comments:

EPA acknowledges and appreciates that the individuals above attended and participated in the EPA public hearing on November 3, 2011 and provided testimony regarding the health of the Merrimack River. EPA agrees that the Merrimack River is an important public resource and has applied the appropriate standards of the Clean Water Act in establishing the terms of the Final Permit for Merrimack Station. Given that the above comments do not include specific recommendations or objections concerning the Draft Permit's limitations or other requirements, no specific changes have been made to the Final Permit as a result of these comments.