



Vermont Micro-Hydro Permitting Process (< 15kW)

Steps for Permits and Incentive Program Participation

1. Project design and pre-permit activities (1-2 months of preliminary design)
 - Preliminary site water flow estimates and financial viability
 - Identify approved micro hydro installer and work to identify suitable design, river impact and system costs
2. Apply to Vermont Small Scale Renewable Incentive Program for incentive reservation approval
 - Requires all the information from Step 1 above
 - If approved, given a one-year reservation, after which time a status report on permitting progress is required
 - Additional one-year extension of reservation may be granted if progress toward permit approval can be shown
3. Concurrent Permitting Activities (2-6 months depending on system design and environmental impacts)
 - VT State Agencies - Agency of Natural Resources (ANR)
 - Contact ANR Permit Specialist and initiate project review to identify applicable state agencies
 - Section 401 Water quality certificate – (2 months or longer)
 - Run of river designs preferred as it would generally avoid the requirements for:
 - Permit for Stream Alteration (not required for removal < 10 cu yards)
 - Wetlands Conditional Use Determination
 - Dam (if water impounded is > 500,000 cubic ft)
 - Fish & Wildlife reviews for impact to aquatic life (1-2 months)
 - US Army Corp. of Engineers
 - 404 Permit required if dredge or fill is added to a navigable waterway or wetland
 - Run of river systems on non-navigable waterways can limit Corp. of Engineers involvement
4. Receipt of FERC permit (minimum of 12 months)
 - Responsible for licensing all non-federal government hydroelectric projects under its jurisdiction; for all projects that:
 - Are on a navigable waterway

- Affect interstate commerce (true of all grid-tied projects)
 - Use federal land
 - Use water or waterpower from a federal dam
 - Requires a license or exemption (Standard designs for systems < 15kW would fall under a small hydropower project (< 5MW) or conduit exemption – existing conduit constructed for non-power producing use)
 - Filing includes system description and operation, environmental report (ANR & US Army Corp of Engineers permits, documentation and correspondence), site location description, and financial analysis
5. Receipt of Certificate of Public Good from the Vermont Public Service Board (PSB) (45 day weigh-in period after posting)
 - Notify adjoining land owners, local planning authorities, and the VT ANR
 - Design meets net-metering technical specs of PSB
 - Submit copies of all necessary federal and state approvals for the project (includes the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC), ANR, and the US Army Corp of Engineers)
 6. Once all approvals are in place, final design work and installation moves forward
 7. Project completion and submission of final incentive documentation
 8. Project documentation is reviewed and system installation is audited
 9. Once approved, incentive payment is made to installer

Further information can be found in the Vermont DPS/ANR publication “Vermont Hydroelectric Development Handbook”, 1980 – available at <http://www.communityhydro.biz/documents/HydroHandbook.pdf>