

**GREATER EAST GRAND REGION ECONOMIC PLANNING GROUP**  
**COMMENTS FOR FERC “FOREST CITY” DAM MEETING**  
**AUGUST 28, 2019**

Good afternoon, my name is Elbridge Cleaves, a life-long resident of Weston. My comments today are as a steering committee member of the Greater East Grand Region Economic Planning Effort - A 300,000 acre initiative with East Grand Lake as its economic centerpiece.

It doesn't take a planning guru to know how significant East Grand Lake is to the economic fabric of our entire area. Contrary to FERC order dated December 21, 2017, “The East Grand Lake shoreline is mostly timber forests” - it is home to nearly 1000 private camp lots, a number of businesses and several public recreational facilities. The customer base from area lake neighborhoods is approximately twice the size and buying power of our local regional population. Waterfront lots on East Grand now occupy tens of millions of dollars in the local tax base. As an economy that is dependent upon scenic beauty, a clean environment and well cared for natural resources, anything that disrupts the desirability of East Grand Lake in the marketplace negatively affects our region.

While we have not conducted an economic analysis of the total impact of the loss of the dam (reductions in long established water levels), the resulting shift in local real estate taxes from decreased waterfront values alone would drive all-ready elevated mil rates to intolerable levels. We believe the consequences would be devastating – undue financial stress leading to loss of local education, banking and health services, to name just a few.

East Grand Lake, as currently vested, embodies the recreational, aesthetic and economic landscape of our entire Region. Jobs in the forest products industry are likewise as important. Rural decline is real and our planning efforts are not without a sense of urgency.

Bottom line: Even the threat of a diminished East Grand Lake has called into question the economic survival of local communities. The actual act would mean collapse. For the Greater East Grand area: Preserving the East Grand Landscape – Preserves the Region.

Elbridge Cleaves  
Steering Committee Member  
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*Greater East Grand Region Economic Planning Group: Local partnering organization: Citizens Organization for Rural Education, Machias Savings Bank, East Grand School, the Town of Danforth, the Town of Weston and the Greater East Grand Lake Chamber of Commerce. Sunrise County Economic Council is the lead partnering agency, with planning assistance provided by the Northern Maine Development Commission.*