



Champlain Hudson Environmental Trust: Riverkeeper's role

As the Champlain Hudson Power Express moves into construction phase, Riverkeeper continues working to ensure that harms to the Hudson River caused by the high-voltage transmission line are mitigated to the fullest extent possible.

New York State officials have announced the start of construction on the Champlain Hudson Power Express (CHPE), a hydropower transmission project that will dig trenches in Lake Champlain and the Hudson River to install high-voltage electric cables from the U.S.-Canada border to New York City. In this new phase, Riverkeeper will continue its watchdog role and seek to ensure that the harms to the Hudson River caused by this project are mitigated to the fullest extent possible.

Specifically, Riverkeeper is fulfilling a commitment to serve on the Champlain Hudson Environmental Trust (CHET) Governance Committee, which will oversee the spending of money on restoration projects to compensate for impacts to the river ecosystem. Riverkeeper also holds seats on the trust's Technical Working Group for the Hudson, Bronx, Harlem and East Rivers.

The \$117 million Environmental Trust Fund was established for the purposes of "protecting, restoring, and improving aquatic habitats and fisheries resources in the Hudson River Estuary, the Harlem and East Rivers, Lake Champlain, and their tributaries," and includes representatives from state agencies, New York City and nonprofit environmental organizations.

Riverkeeper holds a seat on the Governance Committee as a result of its negotiation with project developer TDI in 2013 on a proposed route that eliminates the most significant habitat impacts for the project. In late 2019, Riverkeeper withdrew its support of the CHPE project, based on multiple, serious concerns, including potential impacts to the Hudson and its endangered sturgeon, and the devastating impacts that massive hydropower facilities have on communities and rivers in eastern Canada. Riverkeeper did not prevail in that campaign, and the Public Service Commission awarded state subsidies and the power contract to TDI and Hydro-Quebec for the CHPE project early in 2022.

Though Riverkeeper remains firmly opposed to the CHPE project, its role on the committee will enable Riverkeeper to closely monitor agreed-upon projects designed to protect the Hudson River Estuary, the Harlem, Bronx and East Rivers, Lake Champlain, and their tributaries. By serving on the committee that oversees the distribution of the \$117 million environmental trust, Riverkeeper will have a voice and a vote in selecting the restoration projects that receive funding.

[At Riverkeeper's insistence, members and organizations of the Governance Committee are prohibited from receiving any compensation from the trust](#) and will not be reimbursed by the trust for any expenses incurred as a participant. This is a condition that Riverkeeper negotiated in order to prevent any appearance of conflict of interest.

Further, Riverkeeper has not and will not accept any donations or sponsorship from Blackstone, TDI or any other company involved in the CHPE project.

Riverkeeper will not be involved in the implementation of any of the projects funded by the Trust Fund, nor will it receive any funding associated with the selected projects.

Ensuring that these funds are well spent on restoration projects is squarely within our mission of protecting and restoring the Hudson River.

Going forward, Riverkeeper will be monitoring the various studies performed as the CHPE project moves forward, ensuring that all work performed is in compliance with the laws and regulations that safeguard our rivers and streams.