



Cayuga Lake Watershed Network  
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January 9, 2026

Jonathan Stercho  
NYSDEC Region 7  
5786 Widewaters Pkwy  
Syracuse, NY 13214  
[dep.r7@dec.ny.gov](mailto:dep.r7@dec.ny.gov)

RE: Cayuga Power Plant – SPDES & Water Withdrawal Permits  
*Water Withdrawal Permit# WSA#11,753*  
*SPDES Permit# NY0001333*

Dear Mr. Stercho,

Thank you for your time and consideration of our comments. The Cayuga Lake Watershed Network (CLWN) is an independent nonprofit organization supported by over 400 members. Our mission is to advocate for the health of Cayuga Lake and its 860 square mile watershed, and our programs promote science-backed community education and engagement. We advocate for robust environmental policies, collaborating with government agencies and engaging with the wide range of stakeholders in our community to develop science-based solutions to environmental challenges in the watershed.

**CLWN would like to thank the Department for extending the public comment period** for the permits and recognizing the need for the community to be able to have some more time to discuss this issue. As we have previously commented, **we are requesting that the DEC hold a public hearing on these permits.**

CLWN understands that there are many intersecting conversations with varying levels of incomplete information happening around this site, therefore **we strongly urge the DEC to clarify the status of this site vis-à-vis the current permit applications. A public hearing would greatly benefit community understanding of this process** and how the DEC is engaged in the monitoring of this site. CLWN, and other partners, have compiled questions that would benefit the public discussion around this site. These include, but certainly are not limited to:

- What are the known environmental impacts of the former coal-fired power plant and how is that impacting Cayuga Lake and its watershed?
- How are the proposed limits for stormwater contamination in line with DEC's work to address the long-term environmental contamination associated with this site?
- What actions is DEC taking, inside and outside of this process, to work to address the residual contamination and remediation of this site?
- The Cayuga Power Plant has been closed for more than five years, how do the permit limits align with the current site use? What is the current site use?
- Why are some outfalls being removed from the monitoring program?
- Can the DEC clarify how these permits would be used for a new datacenter or would the site owners be required to obtain new permits for the new use? Would the existing permits be used in the interim?

As previously stated, these are a few of the questions that would benefit from the DEC being in the community to clarify these permits.

Regarding the water withdrawal permit, **CLWN is respectfully requesting that the DEC revoke the existing water withdrawal permit and require Cayuga Power to complete a new permit application for water use.** As the DEC is aware, the site use has significantly changed. In fact, the power plant's water withdrawal report in 2024 still lists the site as a power generating user, despite the removal of the boilers. *The new permit lists the use as cooling water, signaling a change in usage for the site.* The applicant acknowledges that the use of the water is to maintain its legacy permit and is not a necessary use for the site. Therefore, CLWN requests DEC to require a new full permit application for water use from Cayuga Lake and to require the site to cease use of Cayuga Lake water in the interim.

Regarding the SPDES permit, **CLWN appreciates the steps DEC has taken to increase the pollutants that are monitored coming off the Cayuga Power Plant site. CLWN seeks additional clarification on the following:**

1. The permit states that these outfalls are not discharging. How has the Department determined that these outfalls are no longer in use?
2. The permit states that several outfall sites are listed as uncontaminated stormwater. How has the DEC determined that these sites are discharging uncontaminated stormwater since they are coming off a site that hosted coal and coal ash?
3. Where can the public review the annual Discharge Monitoring Reports?
4. Where can the public review the Annual water use report including flow, volume, and impingement and entrainment data? The DEC Info Locator has the annual water withdrawal report, but it does not show impingement & entrainment data.
5. Where can the public review the Cayuga Power Plant BMP and its annual report?
6. Where can the public review the annual mercury minimization program report?
7. Part 360 – Where is the FEIS for the coal ash site? How can the public view it? How has this aligned with mercury minimization plan? Will there be a new SEQR action on this site because it has ceased to be a coal fired power plant? Why or why not?

8. The new permit was submitted to DEC in 2021, however the application was not noticed as complete until 2025. Please explain why there was a delay and how was the site regulated in the interim?

Again, we are very grateful for the DEC's work to reduce the pollutant loads into Cayuga Lake and for extending the time CLWN and other organizations have to submit comments. We, again, respectfully request that the DEC include a public hearing in its response and process associated with these permits.

Sincerely,



Elizabeth Kreitinger  
Steward/Executive Director  
Cayuga Lake Watershed Network

cc:

Dereth Glance, Regional Administrator, NYSDEC Region 7  
Kevin Balducci, Regional Permit Administrator, NYSDEC Region 7  
Lorraine Holdridge, Section Chief, Bureau of Water Permits, Division of Water, NYSDEC  
Anna Kelles, Assemblyperson, District 125, NYS Assembly  
Lea Webb, State Senator, 58<sup>th</sup> Senate District, NYS Senate