

Manon Brouillette  
Chair of the Board  
Hydro-Québec  
75, boulevard René-Lévesque Ouest  
Montréal, QC, H2Z 1A4

Dear Chair Brouillette,

Hydro-Quebec is currently facing a significant opportunity to help protect a fish species, the American eel, by installing an eel ladder for fish passage in conjunction with the renovations at Carillon. You, in this moment, have the power to change the fate of this species for the better. By doing so, you will significantly improve the ecological health of the entire Ottawa River watershed. We urge you to read our request in full and to provide us with a response.

**Over the past four decades, the American eel population in the Ottawa River has plummeted by a staggering 99%.** While various factors contribute to this decline, hydroelectric dams pose one of the greatest threats to this iconic species. The presence of hydroelectric dams restricts migration and diminishes access to freshwater habitats, impacting not only American eels but also numerous other aquatic species. The Carillon Generating Station is located at the mouth of the mighty Ottawa River, thereby acting as the single largest barrier for aquatic species to enter the Ottawa River on migration routes.

More than two years have passed since you announced the renovation project at the Carillon Generating Station. Shortly after this announcement, Ottawa Riverkeeper identified an opportunity for an eel ladder to be installed at this location. We launched a campaign advocating for the addition of an eel ladder as an integral part of the modernization efforts. Regrettably, we are still awaiting confirmation of the inclusion of an eel ladder at the Carillon dam to facilitate the migration of the American eel.

Hydro-Québec has taken commendable steps to provide passage for American eels with the construction of eel ladders at the Chambly dam and Beauharnois generating station. The installation of two eel ladders at the Beauharnois generating station in 2002 has proven highly successful in facilitating the migration of American eels into Lake Ontario. Over 50,000 American eels ascend the ladder each year, with more than 700,000 eels having utilized the Beauharnois facility to migrate upstream to Lake Ontario. Similarly, the installation of an eel ladder at the Chambly Dam along the Richelieu River has yielded similar positive outcomes.

Hydro-Quebec has also collaborated in improving downstream migration survival rates for American eels. These efforts are an important step to improve the survival of the American eel. These examples serve as compelling evidence of the transformative impact that Hydro-Québec can achieve. We applaud these efforts and we request that you apply the same level of concern and responsibility by implementing an eel ladder at the Carillon power station to aid in the survival of the American eel.

The Ottawa River, as the largest tributary of the St. Lawrence River, plays an irreplaceable role as a vital habitat for the American eel. The Ottawa River's sprawling 3,700 km<sup>2</sup> expanse, compared to the Upper St. Lawrence River and Lake Ontario's combined 5,800 km<sup>2</sup>, makes it a critical habitat for this

species., as indicated in the COSEWIC assessment and status report. The importance of ensuring access to the Ottawa River's habitat for the American eel, where fecund females of the species can grow to maturity, cannot be overstated.

Considering the demonstrated benefits of eel ladders at other dams, your action on this issue will have an overwhelmingly positive impact. By installing an eel ladder at the Carillon Generating Station, you offer the best chance for restoring the population of this beautiful and ecologically important species—the American eel. We acknowledge past and ongoing efforts you have made, such as the eel trap and transfer program and studies of mitigation efforts, it is crucial to recognize that these measures fall short of what is needed. We can and must do better if we are to preserve this invaluable legacy.

The addition of a fish pass, specifically an eel ladder, to the Carillon Generating Station is absolutely essential for the recovery of the American eel. Moreover, given the size of the Carillon facility and its substantial impact on the American eel population, Hydro-Québec bears a profound responsibility to spare no effort in securing the prosperity of this species within the Ottawa River watershed.

We sincerely hope that you share our concern and commitment to the preservation of the American eel. We kindly request your urgent attention and action in addressing this matter by approving the inclusion of an eel ladder as part of the renovation efforts at the Carillon Dam. You have the opportunity to lead the way for the recovery and long-term survival of the American eel in the Ottawa River watershed, safeguarding a cherished species for future generations.

Thank you for your time and consideration. We would be glad to further discuss this and other ways that Hydro-Quebec can continue to work to protect the American eel population and partner on our conservation efforts.

Yours sincerely,

Laura Reinsborough

Riverkeeper & CEO  
Ottawa Riverkeeper