

Consumers Energy Continuing to Install Buoys Below Dams for Safety This Summer

JACKSON, Mich., Aug. 5, 2016 – Consumers Energy is coordinating with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources to install buoys this summer to help warn the public to stay out of potentially unsafe areas immediately downstream of hydro facilities.

“People should not be in the immediate area of a dam’s tailrace or spillway for boating, wading or any activity. For safety purposes, our employees can enter these areas only after following stringent safety procedures, which include locking out equipment that affect flow and wearing personal protection equipment,” said Rich Castle, Consumers Energy’s natural resource administrator for hydro operations. “The buoys we installed at three of our hydro facilities last year are performing well, so we are continuing this summer to install the safety buoys at our other river hydro facilities.”

The buoys will stretch across the rivers directly below the dams, where released water can be dangerously turbulent and life threatening. The public is asked to stay downstream from the buoys. Tampering with the public safety device could result in criminal prosecution.

Last year, safety buoys were installed at Foote Dam and Cooke Dam on the Au Sable River and at Croton Dam on the Muskegon River. Buoys are planned to be installed this year at the remaining hydro facilities Consumers Energy owns on the Au Sable, Muskegon, Grand, Kalamazoo and Manistee rivers. Those dams are Mio, Alcona, Loud, Five Channels, Hardy, Rogers, Webber, Calkins Bridge, Tippy and Hodenpyl.



Consumers Energy installed safety buoys at Foote Dam in 2015. The energy provider continues to install buoys this summer at its hydro facilities on the Grand, Manistee, Kalamazoo and Au Sable rivers.

“Consumers Energy has a promise to protect the Michigan communities we serve. That includes taking steps to keep our properties and facilities safe and open to public recreation,” Castle said. “We also want to emphasize that people need to quickly exit the river and heed the sirens and signs that indicate imminent danger from dams during changing flow conditions.”

Consumers Energy, Michigan’s largest utility, is the principal subsidiary of CMS Energy (NYSE: CMS), providing natural gas and electricity to 6.7 million of the state’s 10 million residents in all 68 Lower Peninsula counties.

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