



# Making Decisions by Consensus

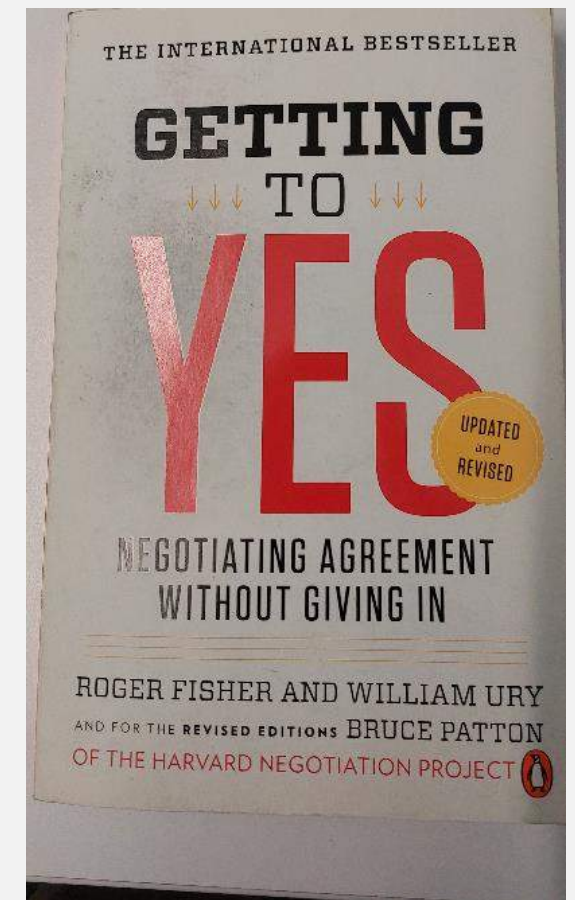
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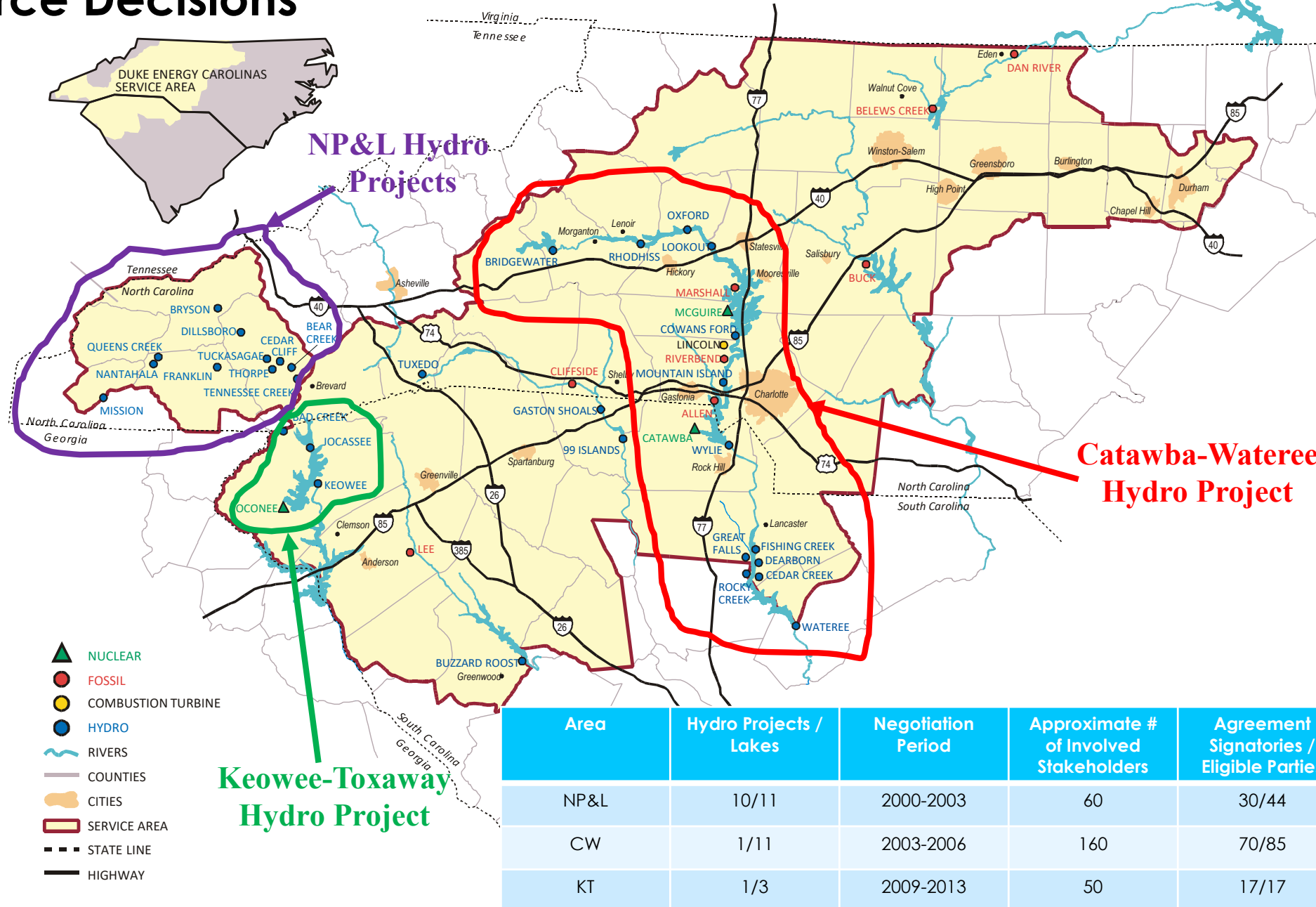
*Agenda Item 4*

# The Process Matters

- Goal – a timely final outcome all parties can live with
- Consensus Rating Scale for Near-Final Draft
  - 1 – Full Endorsement
  - 2 – Endorsement with Minor Points of Contention
  - 3 – Endorsement with Major Points of Contention
  - 4 – Stand aside with Major Reservations (requires changes)
  - 5 - Withdrawal
- Final decision made by Majority Vote
- Understand, Negotiate, Measure, Adjust, Cut
- *Getting to Yes* by Fisher, Ury and Patton



# Interest-Based Negotiation Applied to Water Resource Decisions



# Observations

- **2-step, consensus-based process allows collaborative problem-solving**
  - Prevents domination by the majority
  - Allows trust-building and info-sharing, especially under conditions of conflict
  - Consensus does not mean everyone will be equally happy
  - All do accept that the decision is the best that could be made at the time.
- **Best active listeners (not talkers) are most effective**
- **Talking about interests (not positions) first exposes common ground**
- **Ratings greater than 1 don't indicate failure**
- **Leave time to work on issues causing any 3's and 4's**
- **5's want out----let them go**
- **In the end, you either can or can't live with the River Basin Plan**
  - If you can live with it, then support it



Photo by Charles Corte - UPI

*“Alone we can do so little,  
together we can do so  
much.”*

Helen Keller