



Media Packet

November 2012 – January 2013

2/1/2013

National Hydropower Association

Matthew Nocella

Assistant Manager of Strategic Communications

Introduction

This packet contains NHA press releases along with a sampling of articles related to conventional hydropower, pumped storage, and hydrokinetic technologies that have appeared in the press since November 1, 2012. The table of contents notes if NHA, a member, or both, have been cited in the article. NHA press releases appear first followed by news stories, all in chronological order with the most recent items appearing first.

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STATEMENT

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For Immediate Release

House Energy and Commerce Committee clears hydro bill

Statement of NHA Executive Director Linda Church Ciocci

Washington, D.C. (January 22, 2013) – The following is a statement from Linda Church Ciocci, Executive Director of the National Hydropower Association, on today's approval of H.R. 267, the *Hydropower Regulatory Efficiency Act of 2013*, by the House Energy and Commerce Committee:

"The National Hydropower Association is very pleased with the speed at which the Energy and Commerce Committee approved the Hydropower Regulatory Efficiency Act. It's a common sense, bipartisan piece of legislation that will allow hydropower to contribute more to our nation's energy needs and economic growth.

"The bill's chief sponsors Reps. Cathy McMorris Rodgers and Diana DeGette, along with their original co-sponsors, have done a wonderful job championing it so early in the new Congress. NHA would also like to extend its thanks to Chairman Fred Upton and Ranking Member Henry Waxman for making this a priority for the committee.

"We urge the full House to swiftly pass H.R. 267, as it did unanimously last July."

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PRESS RELEASE

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Media Contact: Matt Nocella
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For Immediate Release

Hydropower industry endorses McMorris Rodgers-DeGette bill *Legislation to promote hydropower development re-introduced*

Washington, D.C. (January 16, 2013) – Bipartisan legislation to promote the development of hydropower resources and their economic and job creation benefits was re-introduced yesterday by Reps. Cathy McMorris Rodgers (R-WA) and Diana DeGette (D-CO).

H.R. 267, the *Hydropower Regulatory Efficiency Act of 2013*, promotes the development of small hydropower and conduit projects and aims to shorten regulatory timeframes of certain other low-impact hydropower projects, such as adding power generation to the nation's existing non-powered dams.

McMorris Rodgers and DeGette were joined by group of bipartisan co-sponsors: Reps. John Dingell (D-MI), Bob Latta (R-OH), Ben Ray Lujan (D-NM), Lee Terry (R-NE), Ed Markey (D-MA), Jim Matheson (D-UT), and Greg Walden (R-OR).

The National Hydropower Association, the industry's national trade association based in Washington, D.C., immediately endorsed the bill.

"NHA appreciates the bipartisan leadership that Reps. McMorris Rodgers and DeGette have demonstrated and looks forward to working with them to get this bill to the President's desk. With so much untapped potential in the U.S. to increase both clean electricity and jobs, hydropower has the ability to be a driving force behind America's economic growth," said NHA Executive Director Linda Church Ciocchi.

Hydropower currently provides about two-thirds of the nation's renewable electricity, with over 90,000 MW of installed capacity from coast to coast, and currently employs approximately 300,000 workers. Estimates done by Navigant Consulting indicate that 60,000 MW of hydropower could be added with the right policies in place, while creating 1.4 million cumulative jobs. The legislation would unlock some of that untapped potential.

"I'm so proud to join my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to reintroduce this bill," said McMorris Rodgers in a statement. "In Eastern Washington, hydropower plays a pivotal role – whether it's conventional, small, or conduit hydro – it provides 75 percent of electricity to the Pacific Northwest and represents a unique opportunity for job creation and energy production. It's clean, reliable, renewable and affordable. Unleashing American ingenuity to increase hydropower production will lower energy costs and help create thousands of jobs. The future of American energy independence depends on the development of an 'all of the above' energy approach – and I'm proud that hydro is finally on its way to being part of it."

“Today we launch a new path toward smarter, more efficient hydropower project permitting, and it’s a victory for us all that we are doing so on a bipartisan basis,” said DeGette in a statement. “For a state like Colorado, and indeed the entire nation, this legislation will expand renewable and affordable hydropower – far and away our nation’s largest source of clean energy – and create good jobs for American families. Together, the House will continue the bipartisan spirit in which the Act was created, to help get Americans back to work and take a step forward in our nation’s clean energy leadership.”

The bill had previously been introduced last Congress by McMorris Rodgers and DeGette. It enjoyed the endorsement of both industry and the environmental community, with NHA and American Rivers both testifying in support.

The House of Representatives moved quickly on the legislation last year, passing the bill unanimously in July following a swift committee process.

NHA is optimistic for the prospects of hydropower legislation in the 113th Congress. Incoming Senate Energy Committee Chairman Ron Wyden (D-OR) and the committee’s Ranking Member Lisa Murkowski (R-AK) have signaled that hydropower is one area on which they intend to act on early. Murkowski introduced and Wyden co-sponsored a similar bill, S. 629 the *Hydropower Improvement Act*, last year.

“The bipartisan support is there on both sides of the Hill. NHA will definitely be working to ensure that hydropower regulatory improvements become law as soon as possible,” Ciocchi said.

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For Immediate Release

Renewable energy tax credit enhancements part of fiscal cliff deal *Modification of qualifying criteria is critical for continued hydropower growth*

Washington, D.C. (January 2, 2013) – The following is a statement from Linda Church Ciocci, Executive Director of the National Hydropower Association, on the modification of qualifying criteria language for key renewable energy tax incentives that were passed as part of a deal to avoid the “fiscal cliff”:

“The National Hydropower Association thanks both the Obama administration and Congressional leadership for including modification of the production and investment tax credits qualifying language in the final version of the fiscal cliff legislation passed by the Senate and House of Representatives yesterday.

“There are tens of thousands of megawatts of untapped hydropower at the nation’s existing infrastructure. This policy change ensures that more of those projects will be built and provide thousands of more Americans access to affordable, reliable hydropower.

“Developers and investors now have the certainty necessary to pursue projects that might not otherwise have gone forward, creating jobs and expanding hydropower production across the country. An informal survey of our members found that nearly two dozen projects representing approximately \$500 million in investments were in limbo based on this change.

“With this final act of 2012, NHA looks to the future and stands ready to work with the soon-to-be sworn-in 113th Congress and a re-inaugurated President Obama to expand hydropower’s contribution to America’s clean energy future.”

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PRESS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

NHA now accepting scholarship applications

Washington, DC (January 2, 2013) –The National Hydropower Association is pleased to announce that it is now taking applications for the 2013 NHA Past Presidents' Legacy Scholarship. The \$2,500 scholarship goes to promising young people who demonstrate the academic skills and commitment to help create the next generation of the hydropower industry.

Details:

Who: (1) current **college** sophomores or juniors who will be **college** juniors or seniors beginning fall 2013, or graduate students with a minimum cumulative 3.0 grade point average on a 4.0 scale (or equivalent) who are enrolled in a full-time undergraduate or graduate course of study at an accredited four-year college or university; or (2) Applicants must be students with an equivalent GPA at an accredited vocational technical school or program.

All applicants must be U.S. Citizens or legal residents.

Applicant must be pursuing a program of study that is related to the hydropower industry: Engineering, sciences (biology, fisheries, and hydrology), communications, or environmental studies.

Application: Available at
<http://hydro.org/about-nha/awards/past-presidents%E2%80%99-legacy-scholarship/>

Deadline: February 15, 2013

Presentation: At the NHA Annual Conference in Washington, D.C., in April 2013

Send application to:

The National Hydropower Association
Past Presidents' Legacy Scholarship Program
Scholarship Management Services
One Scholarship Way, PO Box 297
Saint Peter, MN 56082

Background:

NHA created the Past Presidents' Legacy Scholarship in 2008 to encourage students to consider becoming part of the U.S. hydropower industry. The growing industry has professionals in many

different fields, including engineering, IT, biology, environmental sciences, forestry, hydrology, animal sciences, management, financial services, communications, and other areas. Many companies also offer high-paying skilled labor and technical positions.

Last year's winner, Kaitlyn Martin, is pursuing a degree in Mechanical Engineering at Colorado School of Mines.

Contributions from NHA, the Hydro Research Foundation, organizations throughout the industry, and individual givers fund the NHA Past Presidents' Legacy Scholarship. We encourage everyone who supports the future of clean, renewable, affordable energy to join us in making tax-deductible contributions.

Please send contributions to:

Ms. Pat Halter
Scholarship America
One Scholarship Way
St. Peter, MN 56082

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For Immediate Release

NHA congratulates Barack Obama on his re-election

President has opportunity to expand hydropower in second term

Washington, D.C. (November 6, 2012) – The following is a statement Linda Church Ciocci, Executive Director of the National Hydropower Association, on the re-election of President Barack Obama:

“The National Hydropower Association congratulates Barack Obama on his re-election as president of the United States. With the campaign behind us, it’s now time to get back to the business of the nation in Washington, and we look forward to working with President Obama and his administration over the next four years.

“Hydropower can play a critical role to help the president achieve his goals of economic recovery and 80 percent clean energy use by 2035. We must take advantage of the opportunities over the next four years to enact policies that will unlock the nation’s incredible hydropower resource. Doing so will afford millions of Americans increased access to clean, affordable electricity and create a million new jobs in the process.

“But the president does not have to wait until his second term: critical hydropower bills that improve the regulatory environment for low-impact hydropower projects await Senate action. These bills have strong bipartisan support and, with leadership, could be brought to the president’s desk during the upcoming “Lame Duck” session of Congress.”

###

THE BEST WAY TO TRACK CONGRESS

7. HYDROPOWER:**House panel poised to vote on bills to transfer dam license, bolster small projects**

Hannah Northey, E&E reporter

Published: Tuesday, January 22, 2013

House Energy and Commerce Committee members are slated to vote on two bills today that would ease restrictions on small hydropower projects and a measure that would require federal regulators to transfer a license for two hydroelectric dams to a town in Connecticut.

The panel will mark up the "Collinsville Renewable Energy Promotion Act," sponsored by Rep. Elizabeth Esty (D-Conn.). The [measure](#) would authorize the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission to reinstate and transfer the licenses for two now-defunct dams in Esty's district to the town of Canton, Conn.

The licenses are associated with the state-owned Upper and Lower Collinsville Dams on the Farmington River in Connecticut, which have been out of service since the 1900s and could cost about \$15 million to rebuild. Both projects are under 1 megawatt each.

The project has been at the center of a local dispute over who should be granted a license, if it's revived.

Duncan Broatch, president of Summit Hydropower Inc., said he owned the previous license, but it was revoked because he was unable to revitalize the dams within four years. "It's very difficult for any developer to put a shovel in the ground within four years of being granted a license because of all of the studies and engineering that go into these very difficult [projects]," he said.

The town of Canton has already secured the state's permission to access the site and believes the bill will offer a speedy process for the project to move forward, said Richard Barlow, a Canton official.

But Broatch said such a proposal is unfair. "I feel like I've been betrayed by my congressman; I'm the original licensee," he said. "I'm the one that justifiably should be getting the license back, not some town."

The legislation has faced challenges in the past, having passed the House twice after Democrat Christopher Murphy of Connecticut, a former congressman who recently won a Senate seat, floated the language in 2012 and 2010. Although the House passed the language, the measure never made it past the Senate ([E&E Daily](#), June 25, 2012).

But the measure could see smooth sailing with Murphy in the Senate. Murphy topped GOP nominee Linda McMahon, a former WWE executive, to replace Sen. Joe Lieberman (I), who caucused with Democrats ([E&E Daily](#), Nov. 7, 2012).

The House committee will also vote on a bipartisan bill that would remove hurdles for small hydropower projects.

The "Hydropower Regulatory Efficiency Act of 2013," [H.R. 267](#), would allow hydropower projects under 10 megawatts that use existing canals, pipelines or other conduits to move forward without the usual permitting by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission.

Reps. Cathy McMorris Rodgers (R-Wash.) and Diana DeGette's (D-Colo.) bill would also order FERC to explore a two-year licensing process for hydropower development at existing nonpowered dams and closed-loop pumped storage projects and direct the Energy Department to study pumped storage to support intermittent renewable energy sources like wind and solar.

The House unanimously approved the bill last summer, and there was bipartisan support for it in the Senate, but the measure didn't come to a vote before the end of the 112th Congress.

Reps. John Dingell (D-Mich.), Bob Latta (R-Ohio), Ben Ray Lujan (D-N.M.), Lee Terry (R-Neb.), Ed Markey (D-Mass.), Jim Matheson (D-Utah) and Greg Walden (R-Ore.) co-sponsored the original bill.

The measure is likely to enjoy support in the Senate, where Alaska Sen. Lisa Murkowski, the top Republican on the

Energy and Natural Resources Committee, introduced similar measures last summer.

The legislation also has industry support because developers of small projects are currently forced to spend tens of thousands of dollars to obtain a FERC permit ([E&ENews PM](#), Jan. 16).

Schedule: The markup is today at 10 a.m. in 2123 Rayburn.

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THE LEADER IN ENERGY & ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY NEWS

9. HYDROPOWER:**Bipartisan bills to bolster small projects sail through House panel**

Hannah Northey, E&E reporter

Published: Tuesday, January 22, 2013

The House Energy and Commerce Committee today unanimously passed two bills that would remove hurdles for small hydropower projects.

The "Hydropower Regulatory Efficiency Act of 2013," [**H.R. 267**](#), would allow hydropower projects under 10 megawatts that use existing canals, pipelines or other conduits to proceed without the usual permitting by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission.

The measure from Reps. Cathy McMorris Rodgers (R-Wash.) and Diana DeGette (D-Colo.) also would order FERC to explore a two-year licensing process for hydropower development at existing nonpowered dams and closed-loop pumped storage projects and would direct the Energy Department to study pumped storage to support intermittent renewable energy sources like wind and solar.

The House unanimously approved the bill last summer, and there was bipartisan support for it in the Senate, but it didn't come to a vote before the end of the 112th Congress.

Alaska Sen. Lisa Murkowski, the top Republican on the Energy and Natural Resources Committee, is similarly considering legislation to fast-track the licensing of small hydropower projects, said Robert Dillon, a spokesman for the senator.

Murkowski plans to "look at all the hydro proposals out there and combine the best of them into a Senate bill," Dillon said in an email. "She also wants to add in a measure on relicensing."

The hydropower industry is eager for the bill to move through Congress because developers of small projects are currently forced to obtain costly permits from the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission -- costs that can surpass the final price tag of some projects.

Linda Church Ciocci, executive director of the National Hydropower Association, in a statement called the bill a "common sense, bipartisan piece of legislation that will allow hydropower to contribute more to our nation's energy needs and economic growth."

The House committee also approved the "Collinsville Renewable Energy Promotion Act" from Rep. Elizabeth Esty (D-Conn.). [**H.R. 316**](#) would authorize FERC to reinstate and transfer the licenses for two now-defunct dams in Esty's district to the town of Canton, Conn.

The licenses are associated with the state-owned Upper and Lower Collinsville Dams on the Farmington River in Connecticut, which have been out of service since the 1900s and could cost about \$15 million to rebuild. Both projects are under 1 MW each.

The legislation has faced challenges in the past, having passed the House twice after Democrat Christopher Murphy of Connecticut, a former congressman who recently won a Senate seat, floated the language in 2012 and 2010. Although the House passed the language, the measure never made it past the Senate.

But the measure could see smooth sailing with Murphy in the upper chamber. Murphy topped GOP nominee Linda McMahon, a former WWE executive, to replace Sen. Joe Lieberman (I), who caucused with Democrats.

The vote today marked the committee's first business of the year, and members said they hoped to continue working in a bipartisan manner.

Ranking member Henry Waxman (D-Calif.) urged the panel to focus on climate change in the wake of Superstorm Sandy. "I know this is a difficult issue for your side," Waxman said to GOP members of the panel. "But it's one we cannot ignore."



Bipartisan support moves hydropower bill

By Zack Colman - 01/22/13 12:29 PM ET

The House Energy and Commerce Committee passed a bill Tuesday that would speed up the permitting process for a slate of hydropower projects.

The bill, [H.R. 267](#), would require that the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission investigate capping the licensing timeline at two years for certain hydropower projects.

Democratic and Republican committee leaders praised the bill during a Wednesday markup.

“The first five bills before us today show that we can work together on a shared priority,” Committee Chairman Fred Upton (R-Mich.) said of the package of bills the committee considered, which included the hydropower measure.

Ranking member Rep. Henry Waxman (D-Calif.) added that the bill “produces a balanced, bipartisan approach.”

The bill, co-sponsored by Reps. Cathy McMorris Rodgers (R-Wash.) and Diana DeGette (D-Colo.), is based on a version that passed the full House unanimously in July.

The Senate did not move its iteration out of the Energy and Natural Resources Committee last year. Sen. Lisa Murkowski (R-Alaska), the committee’s ranking member, said the bill fell by the wayside during the final weeks of the 112th Congress.

But the item could get more attention with Sen. Ron Wyden (D-Ore.) at the helm of the committee, as he represents a state awash in potential hydropower.

Supporters of the House bill say the licensing changes are necessary. They contend the process is open-ended, with projects waiting in the pipeline for several years.

The permitting timetable in the House bill would apply to projects at non-powered dams. Construction of a hydropower-based energy storage technology known as closed-loop pumped storage also would benefit from the cap.

The National Hydropower Association (NHA) said that expediting licensing at the nation’s nearly 80,000 non-powered dams could add about 60,000 megawatts of hydropower by 2025.

“The National Hydropower Association is very pleased with the speed at which the Energy and Commerce Committee approved the Hydropower Regulatory Efficiency Act. It’s a common sense, bipartisan piece of legislation that will allow hydropower to contribute more to our nation’s energy needs and economic growth,” NHA Executive Director Linda Church Ciocci said in a Tuesday statement.

Renewable-energy advocates are getting behind the bill because it could facilitate more closed-loop pump storage. That technology would store energy from intermittent renewable sources, such as wind and solar, that utilities could dispense throughout the day.

The bill also would exempt “conduit” projects not specifically designed to produce power — such as canals, aqueducts and tunnels — from federal licensing procedures. It also would raise the licensing exclusion threshold for small hydropower projects to 10,000 kilowatts, up from 5,000 kilowatts.

Source:

<http://thehill.com/blogs/e2-wire/e2-wire/278529-house-energy-committee-passes-hydropower-bill>

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CQ NEWS
Jan. 22, 2013 – 5:15 p.m.

Bill to Ease Rules on Hydropower Backed by Panel

By Anna McGeehan, CQ Roll Call

A House panel backed two hydropower bills Tuesday, including one that would exempt small hydropower dams from Federal Energy Regulatory Commission licensing requirements.

The House Energy and Commerce Committee approved both measures by unanimous consent.

The first bill (HR 267), introduced by Cathy McMorris Rodgers, R-Wash., and Diana DeGette, D-Colo., would exempt hydropower providers offering 5,000 kilowatts of power from the licensing process after they are initially approved. Hydropower plants with the capacity of up to 10,000 kilowatts also would be exempt from FERC licensing requirements.

The House backed similar legislation during the 112th Congress, but the Senate did not take up the measure.

Expanding hydropower facilities and easing the federal licensing process has garnered bipartisan support in the past. “It’s clean, reliable, renewable and affordable. Unleashing American ingenuity to increase hydropower production will lower energy costs and help create thousands of jobs,” McMorris-Rodgers said in a written statement.

The bill also would direct FERC to consider a two-year hydropower licensing pilot program at dams not currently producing power. The agency would be authorized to extend preliminary permit periods for an additional two years.

Henry A. Waxman, the panel’s ranking Democrat, also applauded the measure and highlighted the collaboration between lawmakers, hydropower developers and environmental groups.

“It was a good, cooperative process that produced balanced, bipartisan legislation,” Waxman said.

The committee also approved a bill (HR 316) that would authorize FERC to reinstate licenses for two hydroelectric projects on the Farmington River in Connecticut and authorize the agency to extend the projects for two years. The bill would require an environmental assessment of each new project within 180 days of the bill’s enactment and would transfer the licenses to the town of Canton.

Throughout the markup, lawmakers reiterated support for the measures and also signaled ire with the Senate for stalling the proposals.

“The problem we have with these bills is not bipartisanship, it’s bicameral support,” said DeGette.

“These bills are ones that passed the House pretty unanimously and never got called up in the other body.”

Hydropower initiatives have some allies in the Senate, however. Alaska Sen. Lisa Murkowski, the

ranking Republican on the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, sponsored a bill in the last Congress to promote hydropower production through a competitive grant program, but the measure was not considered on the floor. Senate Energy and Natural Resources Chairman Ron Wyden, D-Ore., has also expressed support for promoting hydropower facilities.

Lauren Gardner contributed to this report.

Source: **CQ News**

Round-the-clock coverage of news from Capitol Hill.

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CQ NEWS
Jan. 18, 2013 – 1:46 p.m.

Hydropower Proposals to Get Consideration in House Panel

By Lauren Gardner, CQ Roll Call

Hydropower is on tap to be one of the few areas of likely bipartisan cooperation on energy this Congress, with a House panel set to mark up a pair of bills next week to expand the use of that resource.

The House Energy and Commerce Committee is scheduled to mark up legislation Tuesday that passed the chamber in 2012 with broad support. One bill (HR 267), sponsored by Washington Republican Cathy McMorris Rodgers and Colorado Democrat Diana DeGette, would exempt certain small hydropower facilities from Federal Energy Regulatory Commission regulatory requirements.

Conduit projects providing less than 5,000 kilowatts of power would no longer be subject to the FERC licensing process after their initial approval. Plants with a capacity of up to 10,000 kilowatts would be exempt from licensing requirements, an increase from the current 5,000 kilowatts. The measure would give FERC the authority to extend preliminary permit periods for two years beyond the initial three years, as well as to consider a two-year licensing process for development at existing dams that are not currently producing power.

The second bill, by freshman Elizabeth Esty, D-Conn., would allow FERC to reinstate two terminated hydropower licenses for dams in Connecticut. Democratic Sen. Christopher S. Murphy sponsored the bill last year as a House member.

Hydropower also will receive attention from key senators in the 113th Congress. Alaska Sen. Lisa Murkowski, the ranking Republican on the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, sponsored a bill in the last Congress to promote hydropower production by establishing a competitive grant program for operators to improve existing facilities and electrify nonpowered dams. Hydropower represented more than 98 percent of Alaska's renewable energy production in 2010.

Energy and Natural Resources Chairman Ron Wyden, D-Ore., shares an interest in advocating for more hydropower facilities, as his state ranks second in the United States for hydropower generation. Although he is not yet ready to introduce related legislation, he plans to work on the issue this year within the committee, said Wyden spokesman Keith Chu.

Source: **CQ News**

Round-the-clock coverage of news from Capitol Hill.

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STAY AHEAD OF THE HEADLINES

4. HYDROPOWER:

Bipartisan bill would clear roadblocks for small projects

Hannah Northey, E&E reporter

Published: Wednesday, January 16, 2013

A bipartisan House bill reintroduced today would remove hurdles for small hydropower projects.

The "Hydropower Regulatory Efficiency Act of 2013," [H.R. 267](#), would allow hydropower projects under 10 megawatts that use existing canals, pipelines or other conduits to move forward without the usual permitting by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission.

Reps. Cathy McMorris Rodgers (R-Wash.) and Diana DeGette's (D-Colo.) bill also orders FERC to explore a two-year licensing process for hydropower development at existing nonpowered dams and closed-loop pumped storage projects and directs the Energy Department to study pumped storage to support intermittent renewable energy sources like wind and solar.

"Today we launch a new path toward smarter, more efficient hydropower project permitting, and it's a victory for us all that we are doing so on a bipartisan basis," DeGette said in a statement. "For a state like Colorado, and indeed the entire nation, this legislation will expand renewable and affordable hydropower -- far and away our nation's largest source of clean energy -- and create good jobs for American families."

The House unanimously approved the bill last summer, and there was bipartisan support for it in the Senate, but the measure didn't come to a vote before the end of the 112th Congress ([Greenwire](#), June 20, 2012).

Reps. John Dingell (D-Mich.), Bob Latta (R-Ohio), Ben Ray Lujan (D-N.M.), Lee Terry (R-Neb.), Ed Markey (D-Mass.), Jim Matheson (D-Utah) and Greg Walden (R-Ore.) co-sponsored the original bill.

The measure is likely to enjoy support in the Senate, where Alaska Sen. Lisa Murkowski, the top Republican on the Energy and Natural Resources Committee, introduced similar measures last summer.

FERC commissioners have acknowledged that federal laws and the responsibilities of state and federal agencies may need to be reviewed to streamline permitting for hydropower projects ([E&E Daily](#), July 8, 2011).

The hydropower industry is eager for the bill to move through Congress because developers of small projects are currently forced to spend tens of thousands of dollars to obtain a FERC permit, said Kurt Johnson, president of the Colorado Small Hydro Association. Those costs can often exceed the cost of the entire project, he added.

"If you're a farmer or rancher permitting a small hydropower system, that's more than you're going to spend for the equipment itself," he said. "That's the genius of the bill."

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THE BEST WAY TO TRACK CONGRESS

9. TAX POLICY:**Treasury, IRS preparing guidance to clarify renewable credit eligibility**

Nick Juliano, E&E reporter

Published: Tuesday, January 15, 2013

The Treasury Department and IRS are preparing joint guidance to flesh out the implications of a significant tweak to a key renewable energy tax cut that was signed into law this month, an official said yesterday.

The timing of the guidance on the new eligibility requirements for the production tax cut remains unclear. Treasury and IRS need to determine how exactly to define when wind and other renewable energy developers can claim the credit after Congress approved a change to its eligibility requirements.

In extending the PTC through the end of the year, as part of the broader "fiscal cliff" deal earlier this month, lawmakers extended the credit to projects that start construction by Dec. 31, 2013, rather than requiring them to be "in service" by that date, as had previously been required.

"We're aware of the need for guidance, and it's forthcoming," said the Treasury official, who requested anonymity and declined to provide additional information on its timing or contents, aside from clarifying that it would be a joint product of Treasury and IRS.

Congressional aides and industry sources say they expect the guidelines to largely mirror those [Treasury outlined](#) for the clean energy grant program created in the 2009 stimulus law, known as 1603. That program offered a 30 percent grant in lieu of an investment tax credit for projects whose construction started by the end of 2011.

"The qualification rule for PTC will definitely be more involved than turning over a shovel of dirt. For example, in the Section 1603 program, a certain percent of total project expenditures must be made to satisfy it," said a Senate aide familiar with the legislation. "That's the type of standard to expect."

Treasury generally required project developers to incur 5 percent of the costs of the project by the 1603 deadline to achieve "safe harbor" status, allowing them to be eligible for the grant.

The changed eligibility requirements were first outlined in a "tax extenders" bill passed last summer by the Senate Finance Committee that was included verbatim in this month's fiscal cliff deal. Wind developers, who were facing an expiration of the credit at the end of last year, said changing the requirements would be necessary to account for the 18 months it generally takes to get a project up and running. Without the shift, they said, extending the credit for just a year would do little to encourage new projects.

Other industries that have the PTC through the end of this year -- geothermal, waste-to-energy, biomass and hydropower -- also lobbied for the language change, arguing that it would facilitate more activity in their industries, where projects can take several years to build.

Guidance from Treasury will send an important signal to renewable companies to assure them that support from the PTC will be available for projects that won't be complete by the end of this year.

"The importance of it is that it sends the signal, not only to markets but to the companies that are making [capital expenditure] allocations, that the program is going to be around for more than a year," said one lobbyist who represents several clients in the wind industry. "You've got to know the benefit is going to be there when you start competing for dollars inside a large corporation."

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THE LEADER IN ENERGY & ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY NEWS

4. RENEWABLE ENERGY:**Policy uncertainty spurred 2012 plunge in U.S. investments -- report**

Nick Julliano, E&E reporter

Published: Monday, January 14, 2013

Clean energy investment in the United States fell nearly a third last year compared with 2011, largely driven by uncertainty around the fate of a key tax break, slackening demand from state renewable energy mandates, falling costs for renewable technology and competition from natural gas, according to research released today.

Investment in U.S. wind, solar, biomass, hydropower and other clean energy projects fell to \$44.2 billion in 2012, down 32 percent from the previous year, according to figures released by Bloomberg New Energy Finance, a research firm. Investments in 2011 were still benefiting from infusions of federal money from the Obama administration's economic stimulus program, which largely disappeared last year, said Ethan Zindler, an analyst with the firm.

The wind sector in particular was buffeted by uncertainty over whether its production tax credit would be extended into this year. The wind industry and its allies mounted an aggressive lobbying campaign throughout the year and ultimately won an extension to the credit earlier this month. But firms were wary to invest before the extension was in place, contributing to the downfall.

"The fact that the PTC extension came so late ... it does help, but it meant that nobody could plan for 2013 until 2013, so that's definitely problematic," Zindler said.

Although 2012 is expected to have been a record year for wind installations -- with the Energy Information Administration projecting more than 12,000 megawatts of capacity additions -- most investments in those projects came in the previous year. Uncertainty over the PTC's fate means developers could not adequately plan projects for this year, reflected in the investment drop and in expectations that installations will fall in 2013, Zindler said.

Furthermore, targets established in state-level renewable portfolio standards have largely been met and are not spurring as much demand, and low-cost natural gas continues to make it difficult for renewable projects to compete, Zindler said.

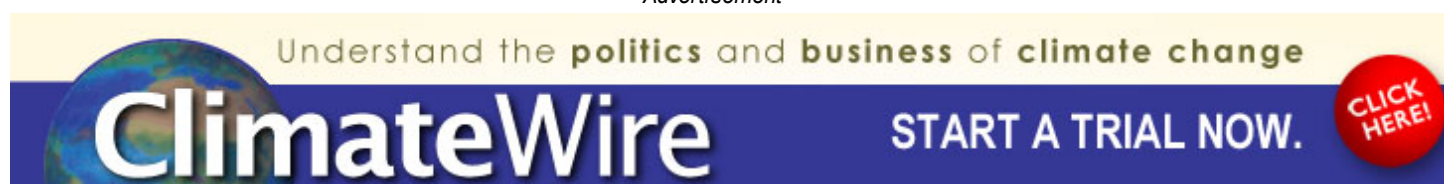
But the report should not be seen as all bad news, he added. The price of wind turbines, solar cells and other clean energy components also has been falling, a scenario that is reflected in the firm's findings.

"When you bring costs down, you need less money, and that's part of what's gone on here," he said.

Worldwide, investment in clean energy fell 11 percent last year, according to the BNEF findings, to \$268.7 billion from \$302.3 billion a year earlier.

Many countries saw their investment level fall, but China surged 20 percent to \$67.7 billion, overtaking the United States to lead the globe in clean energy investment.

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STAY AHEAD OF THE HEADLINES

5. HYDROPOWER:**Alaska governor urges swift federal approval of proposed dam**

Hannah Northey, E&E reporter

Published: Monday, January 14, 2013

Alaska Gov. Sean Parnell is urging federal energy regulators to quickly approve a mega-dam on a wild river in southern Alaska.

The Republican said in a [letter](#) to Federal Energy Regulatory Commission Chairman Jon Wellinghoff and members of Congress last week that FERC might delay its approval of the \$4.76 billion Susitna-Watana hydroelectric dam by up to a year.

"This delay is unacceptable," Parnell wrote to lawmakers including Sen. Lisa Murkowski of Alaska, the top Republican on the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee.

At issue is FERC's request for more information from the Alaska Energy Authority about how it would conduct aquatic studies for the 600-megawatt dam proposed for the Susitna River, about 200 miles from Cook Inlet. The studies relate to water resources, stream flows, and fish and aquatic resources and "contain insufficient detail," said Celeste Miller, a spokeswoman for FERC.

But Parnell said any delay in the dam's construction could jeopardize Alaska's chance to generate up to half its electricity from renewables. The governor also said he has directed the Alaska Energy Authority to finish all pending studies to avoid a delay.

Parnell approved legislation two years ago directing the state agency to pursue construction and licensing of the dam.

The Parnell administration expects the project to be completed by 2024 to meet up to half the state's electricity demand. The dam's reservoir would be 39 miles long and up to 2 miles wide ([Land Letter](#), July 28, 2011).

Opponents of the Susitna-Watana dam say Parnell is sending a political signal that could chill FERC oversight.

Jan Konigsberg, an analyst with the Alaska Hydro Project, said Alaska regulators understood the commission had the authority to change the timeline for licensing the dam and should allow FERC to do its job.

"The signal is a political one to the public and commission that the [governor] is upset and is letting FERC know," Konigsberg said. "That's what politics is, is creating uncertainty in the process that's essentially administrative."

The Parnell administration is pushing the dam as a way to meet the state's renewable energy policy, and because the state is running out of natural gas in the Railbelt region between Fairbanks and Homer. An "antiquated lease program" has failed to stimulate production in the Cook Inlet gas fields, Konigsberg said.

"We'll probably have a shortfall of gas for power and space heating by 2014," he said.

The proposed dam has drawn the ire of environmentalists and fishermen who say the dam would stifle the Susitna, the nation's 15th largest river by volume, which flows unimpeded for 300 miles from glacial mountains to the Pacific Ocean near Anchorage.

The Coalition for Susitna Dam Alternatives is accusing the Parnell administration of overlooking an active earthquake fault only 40 miles from the proposed construction site. The project will also flood caribou migration routes and grizzly bear habitat, and is unnecessary to build in light of newly discovered shale gas plays, they say.

The group has also said the planned dam was a result of "megalomania," because it was the kind of project that politicians would like to be associated with, and is proposing [alternatives](#) including wind, solar, geothermal and tidal power projects.

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6. TAX POLICY:

'Cliff' deal extends energy tax incentives

Nick Juliano, E&E reporter

Published: Wednesday, January 2, 2013

As part of an eleventh-hour deal to avert the "fiscal cliff," Congress yesterday extended and modified a key tax break for wind and other renewable energy sources, resetting the clock for a debate over how the government incentivizes those resources in the new Congress that convenes tomorrow.

The one-year extension to the wind production tax credit delivers a big win for the industry that had made winning a PTC lifeline its top priority. The broad fiscal cliff deal included language extending the PTC deadline through the end of this year and modifying its requirements to allow projects to be eligible for the credit as long as construction begins by the deadline -- a change that also benefits geothermal, hydropower, biomass and waste-to-energy developers that can claim the credit.

The new language means, in effect, that wind developers have more certainty as they plan projects that would go into service over the next two years, because of the planning horizon inherent in such projects. Before the change, projects had to be "in service" and sending electricity to the grid before developers could claim the credit.

"On behalf of all the people working in wind energy manufacturing facilities, their families and all the communities that benefit, we thank President Obama and all the members of the House and Senate who had the foresight to extend this successful policy, so wind projects can continue to be developed in 2013 and 2014," said Denise Bode, who today is leaving her post as CEO of the American Wind Energy Association after four years with the group.

The Geothermal Energy Association, which also lobbied for the eligibility change, estimates that projects in as many as a dozen states will move forward this year under the revised PTC.

"Congress' action will spur significant new employment and sustain geothermal industry growth," Karl Gawell, the group's executive director, said in a statement. "Consumers and utilities will benefit, as well, because developers will have greater certainty about whether the credit will be available for their project."

The House last night passed the cliff deal on a 257-167 vote that required Democratic support to push it over the finish line; 151 Republicans voted against the legislation while 85 supported it. The Senate the day before passed the same bill 89-9. Obama has signaled he will sign the bill into law.

The votes demonstrated the relatively small role the PTC played in getting a deal. Sen. Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa), one of the tax credit's most vocal champions, said in a statement that he voted against the deal because it did not contain adequate spending cuts. Sen. Michael Bennet (D-Colo.), another PTC supporter, also voted against the deal, saying it would not do enough to reduce the debt. In the House, Republicans who have supported a PTC extension were split on the broader deal; of 16 GOP freshmen who signed a letter earlier this summer calling for an extension, six supported the deal while nine voted against it and one did not vote.

The bill extended the PTC and 11 other energy-related tax incentives -- for home weatherization, efficient appliances, electric motorcycles, biofuel infrastructure, alternative fuels and other activities. But those were a relatively minuscule piece of the overall legislation, which was primarily aimed at preventing higher tax bills that individuals would have faced over the expiration of tax cuts first enacted under President George W. Bush.

The agreement to avert the cliff caps months of drama among renewable energy supporters and lobbyists over whether their vital tax support would continue into this year. Although the energy incentives were not central to the deal, they still faced stiff resistance from some Republicans and conservative groups. But there was a sense that the deal would not rise or fall based on whether the energy breaks were included.

"We were concerned. At same time, we realized several weeks ago at this point there wasn't much more to do," one wind industry lobbyist said. "It was really out of our hands."

The final deal included legislation that came out of the Senate Finance Committee in August, extending a dozen

energy tax breaks, including the 2.2-cents-per-kilowatt-hour wind PTC. Extending and modifying the PTC was the largest break extended, with a price tag of about \$12 billion over the next decade, out of about \$18 billion total for the energy incentives.

Other credits that won extension include the so-called 25C credit that covers 10 percent of the cost of efficiency upgrades to homes; a credit to cover 30 percent of the costs of alternative-fuel vehicle refueling stations, which advocates say will encourage the adoption of 15 percent ethanol blends; a \$1.01-per-gallon cellulosic biofuel producer credit; a \$1-per-gallon biodiesel credit; a \$1,000-to-\$2,000 credit to build efficient new homes; and credits providing \$25 to \$250 to cover production of efficient appliances.

"The extension of these important provisions demonstrates the Obama administration's stalwart support of biofuels and Congress' belief in the promise of energy independence and job creation through domestic renewable energy resources," said Bob Dinneen, president and CEO of the Renewable Fuels Association, referring to the cellulosic biofuel and infrastructure credits.

While clean energy advocates and environmentalists are celebrating today, their victory is still a temporary one. AWEA has said the wind industry will need the PTC through at least 2018, although it has suggested allowing the level of support to phase down over that time, and other industries also have said support beyond this year will be needed.

Meanwhile, conservative opponents of the PTC are vowing to keep up their fight to kill it over the course of this year. Thomas Pyle, head of the anti-PTC American Energy Alliance, said the wind industry's decision last month to float a plan to phase out the credit over six years was an admission that the industry could live without taxpayer subsidies.

"That is no small victory for free market advocates who have opposed this and other wasteful government handouts," Pyle said in an emailed statement. "We now have a year in front of us to continue educating the American people and their representatives about the problems with wind energy and the negative impact on our economy from this and other expensive, inefficient and unreliable energy sources."

AWEA's phaseout proposal was framed as an option for Congress to consider in the context of comprehensive tax reform, and industry sources have stressed that they view the six-year time line as the bare minimum necessary to maintain a "minimally viable" wind sector. But there is a sense among some lawmakers and congressional aides that the proposal was more of an opening bid in coming negotiations and that the industry ultimately could accept a phaseout over five or fewer years.

"We'll see how well they're able to hold to that," said Richard Caperton, a clean energy expert with the liberal Center for American Progress, regarding the industry's position.

Given the difficulty Congress had averting the worst of the fiscal cliff -- with a deadline for the largest tax increase in history hanging over its head along with huge budget cuts -- it remains to be seen whether lawmakers have the will to embark on a more difficult overhaul of the tax code, although leaders in both parties say it remains a priority.

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Hydro industry benefitting from fiscal cliff deal

America's hydroelectric industry received a late Christmas present as the U.S. Congress passed a one-year extension of renewable energy tax incentives last night.

The production tax credits, which equate to 1.1 cents/kWh for qualified hydroelectric projects, were extended as part of a deal to avoid the "fiscal cliff" and also extend to the wind, geothermal, biomass and waste-to-energy industries.

The extension is being applauded by the National Hydropower Association (NHA), which said the legislation will help grow domestic hydroelectric resources.

"There are tens of thousands of megawatts of untapped hydropower at the nation's existing infrastructure," said NHA Executive Director Linda Church Ciocci. "This policy change ensures that more of those projects will be built and provide thousands of more Americans access to affordable, reliable hydropower."

Leaders in [renewable energy fields](#) had [originally asked Congress to consider extending the production tax credit through 2016](#), saying it was essential for continued development.

"Developers and investors now have the certainty necessary to pursue projects that might not otherwise have gone forward, creating jobs and expanding hydropower production across the country," Ciocci said. "An informal survey of our members found that nearly two dozen projects representing approximately US\$500 million in investments were in limbo based on this change."

For more policy and regulation news, [click here](#).

To access this Article, go to:

<http://www.hydroworld.com/content/hydro/en/articles/2013/january/hydro-industry-benefitting-from-fiscal-cliff-deal.html>

6. TAX POLICY:

Non-wind renewables voice support for PTC modification

Nick Julliano, E&E reporter

Published: Wednesday, December 12, 2012

While wind has grabbed most of the attention in the push to extend the production tax credit, other renewable energy industries are lobbying in support of a small but significant tweak to the credit's eligibility requirements endorsed by a Senate committee earlier this year.

Representatives of the biomass, hydropower, geothermal and waste-to-energy industries wrote President Obama applauding his support for the PTC.

Unlike wind, which loses access to the PTC at the end of this year without an extension from Congress, those industries retain access through next year. But they say the structure of the credit, which requires projects to be fully operational before developers can claim it, still means that new development will be depressed next year.

Representatives of the Biomass Power Association, Energy Recovery Council, National Hydropower Association and Geothermal Energy Association are throwing their support behind a modification to the credit's eligibility requirement championed by Sen. Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa) and endorsed earlier this year by the Senate Finance Committee. That change, which wind supporters also are lobbying for, makes eligible any projects that begin construction by the end of next year ([E&E Daily](#), Dec. 10).

"The Finance Committee recognized that many renewable power projects are unable to move forward because developers and investors are concerned that those projects cannot be completed before the renewable electricity production credit expires," the trade association leaders write in a Dec. 7 [letter](#) to Obama. "This is particularly true in the case of biomass, hydropower, geothermal and waste-to-energy facilities, which have longer development, permitting and construction timelines than do wind energy facilities."

House Republicans are seen as the main impediment to the Finance Committee language making it into law. An extension of the PTC and other so-called tax extenders is expected to be included in a "fiscal cliff" bill being negotiated between Obama and House Speaker John Boehner (R-Ohio). But lobbyists working the issue say House Republicans are wary of the higher cost that goes along with the Finance modification. The Joint Committee on Taxation estimates it would cost about \$12 billion over the next decade.

Grassley said he has all five members of Iowa's House delegation, two Republicans and three Democrats, on board with his modification to the PTC requirements. He said he lobbies other House members "only as I see them" but doesn't "seek specific ones out." He declined to name any other members he has persuaded to support the change.

Bob Cleaves, president and CEO of the Biomass Power Association, says the decision to send the letter to the president was part of an "all hands on deck" approach to "communicate with both our supporters and the folks who need to come around" on supporting an extension.

The importance of base-load renewable sources, which provide steady electricity supplies unlike intermittent sources like wind, is "getting lost in a much stronger chorus of discussion around the wind PTC," Cleaves said in an interview yesterday.

Biomass has about 2,025 megawatts of installed capacity. Cleaves pointed to three projects completed in recent years -- two 100 MW plants in Florida and Texas and a 75 MW facility in New Hampshire -- that "wouldn't have happened without the benefits" of the PTC. It takes four to five years to get a biomass facility up and running, Cleaves said, so activity already has sharply declined in the industry well ahead of next year's deadline.

Over the longer term, Cleaves said his industry would lobby for a longer-term extension of the credit and incentive parity with wind.

Open-loop biomass, geothermal and waste-to-energy projects get 1.1 cents per kilowatt-hour from the PTC,

whereas wind, geothermal and closed-loop biomass get 2.2 cents per kWh. Open-loop biomass uses recycled waste from agriculture, forestry or other activities as a feedstock, whereas closed-loop biomass relies on plants grown exclusively for use in the facility, according to the Congressional Research Service.

The hydro industry also has seen activity decline because of PTC uncertainty, said Matthew Nocella of the National Hydropower Association. He said an informal survey of the association's members revealed close to two-dozen projects -- comprising about \$500 million worth of investment -- are in limbo pending a change to the PTC.

Because certain hydro projects were made eligible for the PTC in the 2005 energy bill, more than 100 projects, such as upgrades to existing dams, have been completed, and those have produced about 1.5 million megawatt-hours, enough to power roughly 145,000 homes for a year, Nocella said.

Reporter John McArdle contributed.

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December 11, 2012 11:47 pm

Renewable energy seeks tax credit extension

By Anna Fifield in Washington

Wind and other renewable energy companies are pressing for an extension in the production tax credit that is on the chopping block as the negotiations over averting the fiscal cliff continue.

Extending the credit and changing the eligibility requirements would boost alternative energy production and create jobs, according to representatives for the geothermal, hydropower and biomass energy industries.

“The point that we have been trying to make to the White House and Congress is that we are essentially already at the cliff because of the lead times for our projects,” said Karl Gawell, executive director of the Geothermal Energy Association.

First instituted in 1992, producers of wind energy receive a production tax credit of 2.2 cents per kilowatt-hour credit for power production, while geothermal and biomass energy have received the credit since 2004.

Hydro power and other alternative industries, including landfill gas and municipal solid waste, became eligible the following year but receive only half that amount - 1.1 cent per kilowatt-hour.

The industries say they need the subsidy to compete against other traditional power producers.

The credit for wind producers – by far the biggest users of the credit, costing the federal government about \$1bn a year – expires at the end of this year, and the industry is lobbying hard for an extension.

While the credit for the other producers is not set to run out until the end of 2013, the industries are also pushing for a three-year extension as well as a change in language.

Currently the credit is only for projects due to be completed by the end of 2013, but the Senate

finance committee has passed a change that would make eligible projects where construction has merely begun.

“That would open up the window a little bit more and allow more projects to meet the deadline,” said Jeff Leahey of the National Hydropower Association, noting that hydropower stations have a longer regulatory and licensing process than other producers and take longer to build than a wind farm.

The change would cost about \$12bn over 10 years, but Mr Gawell said it could generate as much as \$4bn in investment in the geothermal industry alone.

President Barack Obama pledged to renew the tax credit while campaigning for re-election, and some Republicans are supportive.

Chuck Grassley, the Republican senator from Iowa, a state with wind farms as well as component producers, said the tax credit was working and should be part of the effort in Washington to help get more Americans working.

“Nationally, the wind energy industry supports 75,000 jobs,” he said on the Senate floor on Tuesday, adding that these jobs – and broader growth – were at risk if the credit expires.

“Certainty about tax policy and affordable energy are factors for economic growth,” he said.

Uncertainty about the credit has led wind turbine manufacturers including Siemens to lay off workers.

The industries have also been appealing to John Boehner, the Republican speaker of the House whose home state of Ohio was the fastest growing state for new wind energy projects last year.

However, in a time of austerity, many other Republicans and fiscal conservatives are opposed to extending the credit.

Americans for Prosperity, a conservative think-tank backed by oil and gas magnates David and Charles Koch, and FreedomWorks have lobbied for an end to the credit.

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E² Wire

THE HILL'S Energy & Environment Blog

Energy groups tell Obama change to wind incentive also benefits other renewables

By Zack Colman - 12/11/12 01:26 PM ET

A change to the text of a wind-power tax credit would increase investment in several types of renewable energy, industry groups wrote President Obama last week.

The groups say that while credits for their industries are locked in through 2013, altering the incentive's language within the Senate Finance Committee's tax package would boost investment for 2013.

The change would allow geothermal, hydropower, waste-to-energy and biomass projects under construction before 2014 to collect a 2.2-cent per kilowatt-hour credit for power production. Currently, those projects must be in service by 2014 to receive the incentive.

"A rule that will allow renewable projects to go forward based on when construction begins is a major policy improvement that will allow many more clean energy projects to move forward," the groups told Obama in a [letter](#).

Letter signatories included the Geothermal Energy Association, Biomass Power Association, Energy Recovery Council and the National Hydropower Association.

The wind industry has been on the front line for extending its use of the credit, which expires Dec. 31.

But the groups say the language change is just as important to their industries as the one-year extension is to wind.

They explained biomass, geothermal and hydropower projects face a longer permitting and construction process than wind power. They said the adjustment would relieve investor anxiety about meeting the Dec. 31, 2013, deadline.

"The Finance Committee recognized that many renewable power projects are unable to move forward because developers and investors are concerned that those projects cannot be completed before the renewable electricity production credit expires," they wrote Obama.

Karl Gawell, executive director of the Geothermal Energy Association, told The Hill the modification would generate as much as \$4 billion of geothermal investment.

"It would turn next year from being a real bust year ... to a real boom year," he said.

Gawell said the requirement that projects come into service by 2014 to receive the credit is shutting geothermal projects out of competitive bids.

He said that is because project developers cannot assure the utilities with which they contract that the credit will remain in place. Proving projects can meet the Dec. 31, 2012, deadline for coming online also is proving troublesome, he said.

For now, renewable energy industries affected by the tax credit are in a holding pattern.

Sen. Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa) has said the Senate will not move the tax extenders package while Obama and Speaker John Boehner (R-Ohio) work on a pact to avoid deep automatic spending cuts and income tax hikes slated for Dec. 31.

But Gawell said he would hold out hope that those talks yield the change his and other renewable energy industries seek.

“Some people hate it when Mr. Obama and Mr. Boehner are talking. But when principals get together and talk, things can change,” he said.

Source:

<http://thehill.com/blogs/e2-wire/e2-wire/272247-energy-groups-tell-obama-change-to-wind-incentive-also-benefits-other-renewables>

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POLITICO

Senate should pass hydropower improvements

By: [Rep. Cathy McMorris Rodgers](#) and [Rep. Diana DeGette](#)

November 28, 2012 09:45 PM EST

As Congress faces tough questions about our fiscal future, we also have a unique opportunity to advance bipartisan energy policy that will create jobs. Putting Americans to work by expanding the nation's access to clean, affordable hydropower is a solution on which the House of Representatives already found consensus. Indeed, when we passed the Hydropower Regulatory Efficiency Act earlier this year, we acted unanimously — the only example of unanimity on an energy issue in this Congress. That is why we urge the Senate to take up and pass this hydropower legislation before the end of the year.

Hydropower has provided the U.S. with affordable, reliable, sustainable energy for over 130 years. Today, hydropower makes up two-thirds of the nation's renewable-electricity supply, and regions that get a majority of their electricity from hydropower have on average the lowest electricity bills in the nation. Hydropower's flexibility contributes to a more stable electric grid and enables integration of additional variable renewable resources.

The Department of Energy reports that more than 12 gigawatts of capacity could be installed at our nation's existing non-powered dams. That's the equivalent of 12 nuclear power plants. In fact, only 3 percent of the country's 80,000 dams currently have generation facilities. Many developers are also exploring smaller applications, including construction in engineered irrigation conduits.

The potential of hydropower to create jobs is also enormous. A 2010 study conducted by the National Hydropower Association revealed that by utilizing currently untapped resources, the U.S. could add approximately 60,000 megawatts of new hydropower by 2025, creating up to 700,000 jobs in the process. It is estimated that for every megawatt of new small hydropower installed at existing dams without hydropower, 5.3 jobs are created (including direct, indirect and induced jobs). With jobs still scarce for too many Americans, we should be looking at every opportunity to put Americans back to work.

All of these factors make clear that Congress should be working to increase Americans' access to hydropower. That is why we came together to collaborate on the HREA. It facilitates the development of small hydropower and conduit projects and studies the feasibility of a streamlined two-year permitting process for other low-impact development. With minimal authorizations that are completely offset, the bill adds no costs to taxpayers.

The unanimous passage of our bill in the House was a bright spot of bipartisan cooperation this year. Ten members of Congress from both parties joined us as sponsors of the bill. Both the National Hydropower Association, the trade association that promotes the development of our hydropower resources, and American Rivers, the largest advocacy group dedicated to protecting the health of our nation's waterways, testified in support of the legislation.

But since passage, the HREA has stalled in the Senate. Without immediate Senate action, the 113th Congress will have to spend additional time and resources to reintroduce and advance policy we've already reached agreement on — time that would be better spent focusing on other important energy-related issues. The time is now for the Senate to approve these hydropower regulatory improvements. We must not pass up this opportunity for bipartisan energy legislation when the finish line is in sight.

Rep. Cathy McMorris Rodgers is a Republican from Washington and chairman of the House Republican Conference. Rep. Diana DeGette is a Democrat from Colorado and chief deputy whip.

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GUEST VIEWPOINT: Senate must act to expand hydropower options

BY MARC THALACKER**Published:** Today

Politicians in Washington, D.C., can't find much to agree on, but at least one thing should bring them together: hydropower. It makes so much sense that even Republicans and Democrats can find common ground at the end of a fiercely partisan election year.

Back in July, the House of Representatives passed unanimously a bill that would encourage more hydropower. That's because hydropower is a no-brainer: a reliable, sustainable and affordable source of energy that is readily available.

The question is: If hydropower generates so much clean, renewable power, why hasn't the U.S. Senate passed the same bill the House did? And if the Senate hasn't passed it yet, will it be able to before the year ends?

We hope Oregon Sens. Ron Wyden and Jeff Merkley continue their strong efforts and will lead the charge. Oregon ranks second in the nation's generation of hydropower, just after Washington state; hydro provided 80 percent of Oregon's renewable electricity in 2011, powering 2.6 percent of the United States' total energy consumption. Hydropower provided 75 percent of the United States' renewable energy in the same year.

Hydropower comes in many different shapes and sizes, all of which have the potential to grow significantly, particularly here in Oregon.

There are old dams that, with retrofits, could improve their efficiency vastly and generate more electricity. There are also dams that do not currently produce power but could do so with modifications.

Small hydro projects that generate electricity can be built in existing canals, pipelines and irrigation channels.

There is tremendous unutilized potential for new hydropower projects. The Department of Energy has shown that there are 12,000 megawatts of untapped potential in the United States' existing dams. Other reports have found that, with good policy, the United States could build 60,000 megawatts of hydropower capacity by 2025.

Three Sisters Irrigation District knows the value of hydro. For the past 12 years, we have replaced open ditches with pipes to eliminate canal seepage and to provide pressurized water to the farmers we serve, thus eliminating their pumping stations. In our Lower Bridge subdistrict alone, it is saving 3 million kilowatt-hours of electricity annually. So far the irrigation district has piped 40 miles of a 60-mile system and has reduced seepage by more than 50 percent.

Upon completion of the project, the water flowing through a newly added turbine is expected to produce an average of 3.1 million kilowatt-hours of electricity. That is enough electricity to supply more than 300 homes with renewable energy for seven months out of the year.

Additionally, the pipeline provides the resources for sustainable farming while at the same time increasing stream flow to allow for successful reintroduction of steelhead and salmon into Whychus Creek, a tributary of the Deschutes River.

The project is proof positive that hydropower is a triple win for Oregon: for our energy, our agriculture and our environment.

Projects such as these also create good manufacturing jobs here in the United States. Hydro projects need new machinery to generate power, and as the demand increases, factories — often located near demand — hire more workers to make them. Oregon already manufactures hydropower parts, and it could build even more and hire more workers to do it.

The legislation passed by the House of Representatives is a step in the right direction.

The House bill reduces the number of regulatory hurdles to building low-impact hydropower projects — particularly smaller projects and upgrades to existing facilities.

Regulation and subsequent delays sometimes can cost as much if not more than the project materials. Reducing those unnecessary costs is critical.

Senators Wyden and Merkley can help make sure hydropower legislation crosses the finish line. We should take advantage of our nation's vast hydroelectric resources so we can build a cleaner energy future and create jobs for Oregonians.

It just makes sense.

Marc Thalacker is manager of the Three Sisters Irrigation District in Sisters.

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Kaukauna Utility rebuilds century-old hydroelectric plant

Nov 10 - McClatchy-Tribune Regional News - Thomas Content Milwaukee Journal Sentinel
An unusual construction project in Kaukauna will keep electricity flowing thanks to the currents of the Fox River.

The project is the rebuilding of the Badger Hydro generating station, which has been producing electricity for more than 100 years.

The \$38 million project is retiring an old, small hydro plant, the circa-1908 Old Badger, and rebuilding the project known as New Badger -- which dates to 1927.

When the project is completed late next year, Kaukauna Utilities will be generating more power from one new generator than it was from the two older ones combined, said Jeff Feldt, executive director of Kaukauna Utilities.

The municipal utility supplies 20% of its customers' electricity needs from hydroelectric power, a form of renewable energy that has been part of Wisconsin for generations but doesn't get as much attention as newer technologies like wind and solar.

Investing in hydroelectric power makes sense for customers long term, though it will mean an increase in rates for the small utility's customers next year, Feldt said.

"We know that this plant should last 100 years because we had proof sitting right next door," he said. "When you look at what this does for our customers going forward, it is a significant advantage to have hydro."

Because the power is derived from the river's flow, it means the plant has no fuel costs. That will help insulate customers from future fuel price increases.

Rebuilding the project has been an unusual piece of work. The long, 12-foot-deep canal off the Fox River where the project sits had to be drained -- one foot per day -- beginning in May.

Before construction could begin, the utility had to hire a fisheries consultant to conduct a "fish rescue."

More than 5,000 fish -- 23 species in all -- were rescued and moved to the Fox River, Feldt said.

After the draining came the demolition of one of the two old hydro plants and then much-needed work to shore up the stone walls of the man-made canal that was originally built 130 years ago, Feldt said.

"Once we drained the power canal, you saw the workmanship that was done 130 years ago was just amazing," he said.

Contractors with Boldt Construction saved many of those stones, which will be reused to give the canal walls above the water line a historic and familiar look.

"From the public's perspective it will look very much like it did originally, but from a structural perspective it will be much more sound and watertight, so to speak," said Paul Coenen, vice president at Boldt Construction who is overseeing the project.

Boldt is active in building energy projects, from the Charter St. natural-gas-fired power plant in downtown Madison to the biomass generation plant under construction for We Energies at the Domtar paper mill in Rothschild.

Boldt has had experience with repairing hydro plants, but, "This is the first time that I know that we've done an entire rebuild," said Coenen.

What makes it unique, other than working in the bottom of a canal?

"It's a construction project that spans six to seven city blocks," said Coenen. "It's just a long distance from one end to the other. It creates somewhat of a communication and organization and logistical challenge, by how spread out the job is."

When it's completed, the new project will generate 7 megawatts of power -- an increase of 25% from the two old plants -- enough to serve about 4,000 homes.

That's small in the scheme of the major power plants built in Wisconsin in recent years.

"But it's big for Kaukauna Utilities," said Feldt, whose power company serves 14,000 customers.

A typical Kaukauna Utilities customer would see prices rise by about 6.3%, or \$5.44 a month.

"It is a rate increase, but it is an investment in the future and will help stabilize our rates going forward," said Feldt.

The state Public Service Commission is reviewing the Kaukauna Utilities' rate increase request.

An unusual construction project in Kaukauna will keep electricity flowing thanks to the currents of the Fox River.

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What Obama's re-election could mean for the hydropower industry

Re-elected U.S. President Barack Obama's comments in his 2012 State of the Union address about advocating for an "all-out, all-of-the-above strategy that develops every available source of American energy" provide hope for the hydroelectric industry in the U.S. over the next four years.

[Obama](#), who defeated Republican candidate Mitt Romney with a 303-206 advantage in the Electoral College, also said in the this address that he wants to double America's share of power generated by clean energy sources to 80% by 2035 by investing in a number of renewable sectors, including hydro.

The President's re-election is being lauded by the National Hydropower Association, which urges Obama's White House to consider hydroelectric generation in the nation's energy mix.

"With the campaign behind us, it's now time to get back to the business of the nation in Washington, and we look forward to working with President Obama and his administration over the next four years," says NHA Executive Director Linda Church Ciocci. "We must take advantage of the opportunities over the next four years to enact policies that will unlock the nation's incredible hydropower resource. Doing so will afford millions of Americans increased access to clean, affordable electricity and create a million new jobs in the process."

[A trio of bills that would help U.S. hydroelectric development are making their way through Congress](#), and as Church notes, they could potentially be enacted before the new Congress assembles in January.

Included are the Hydropower Improvement Act of 2011, [the Hydropower Regulatory Efficiency Act of 2012](#), and the [Bureau of Reclamation Small Conduit Hydropower Development and Rural Jobs Act of 2012](#).

Each passed the Republican-controlled House during the current congress, and although they now face a Democrat-led Senate, all three have received support from both sides of the aisle.

"The President does not have to wait until his second term," Ciocci says. "These bills have strong bipartisan support and, with leadership, could be brought to the President's desk during the upcoming 'lame duck' session of Congress."

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Renewable Energy Industry Weighs In On Obama Victory

By Vince Font, Contributor | November 7, 2012

Salt Lake City, UT -- With the 2012 election over and President Barack Obama's re-election secured, U.S.-based renewable energy producers are already looking ahead to what they expect will be four more years of continued support for their endeavors.

A Collective Sigh of Relief

According to Ed Feo, co-founder of [USRG Renewable Finance](#) (USRGRF), last night's Obama win brings "a continuation of policies that are favorable to renewables." Feo also sees one of the chief issues at hand, the impending expiration of the wind energy Production Tax Credit on December 31, as one that will likely receive robust support as a consequence of the election results. "I think the Obama administration will push for that," Feo said.

Feo isn't the only one who's perceiving Obama's victory as a new breath of life for a group of industries whose futures may have seemed in question during certain points throughout the 2012 election season. For Scott Sklar, President of [The Stella Group](#), the Obama re-election has "significant and consequential positive impact on growth and development of the U.S. energy efficiency and renewable energy industries."

"The President has made clean energy one of the top three planks of his administration," Sklar said in a press release issued today. "The President has supported extension of the wind energy production tax credit, whereas his opponent opposed that extension and called green jobs 'fantasy'." Sklar also predicts double-digit growth in the overall renewable energy market as a result of continued procurement for energy efficiency on the part of federal and state governments, and points to this year's [REN21 Renewables Global Status Report](#), which announced \$282 billion of global private sector investment in 2012, as evidence of massive worldwide interest in renewables.

Industry Experts Convey Renewed Hope

Rhone Resch, CEO of the [Solar Energy Industries Association](#) (SEIA), shares Sklar's optimism and calls Obama "a tremendous supporter of solar energy." Resch foresees a continuation of support for solar power from the Obama administration, which he says has been greatly instrumental in the industry's job growth. "Today, the solar industry employs more than 119,000 Americans at 5,600 companies, mostly small businesses, across all 50 states – this is more than double the number of Americans working in solar in 2009," Resch said in a press release published today.

Resch added that since Obama's election in 2008, "the amount of solar powering homes, businesses, and military bases has grown by 400 percent – from 1,100 megawatts in 2008 to more than 5,700 megawatts

today. The Administration enacted a policy allowing solar installations for the first time on public lands and set a goal to permit 10 gigawatts of additional renewable energy projects on public lands by the end of 2012, which has been a great driver of this growth.” Resch also cited figures that show U.S. solar power installations in 2012 will be “another year of record growth” for the solar industry.

Linda Church-Ciocci, Executive Director for the [National Hydropower Association](#) (NHA), said that while the hydropower industry has been “highly supported by both parties for some time,” certain gains have been made possible during the last four years that may otherwise not have been possible without the appointment of Steven Chu, Obama’s United States Secretary of Energy. “Secretary Chu understands the value of hydro,” Chuch-Ciocci said. “That has been a very important development with this administration.”

Meanwhile in biofuels, experts are predicting that the Obama administration will likely double its efforts with respect to the Renewable Fuel Standard (RFS), which was signed into law by George W. Bush in 2005 and later revisited by Obama. Calls to rid the U.S. of its dependence on foreign oil has caused rapid growth in the biofuels industry, accounting for a 182 percent growth in ethanol and biodiesel production between 2006 and 2011, [according to Biofuels Digest](#).

'We've Got More Work To Do'

In echo of Obama’s words during his victory speech in Chicago last night — where the President told supporters, “We’ve got more work to do” — Feo indicated that although gains are being made, there are still more to be made in support of renewable energy initiatives. “We have to expand financing tools, which are available to other sectors — such as Master Limited Partnerships — to include renewable energy,” Feo said.

In addition, Feo stressed the need to incentivize investment in renewables through the extension and continued support of tax credit regimes like the PTC and the Investment Tax Credit (ITC) — the latter of which is scheduled to see a significant drop in percentage return at the end of 2016. “I think the Obama administration will push to extend it or to have some continued level of support,” Feo said.

Perhaps as a sign that it’s not just the renewable energy sector that’s taking Obama seriously on his intent to further the pursuit of more clean energy initiatives, [coal stocks took a steep plunge](#) on Wednesday following the election results. This news comes as no surprise to those aware of Obama’s plans to bring more stringent regulations to oil and coal producers in his second term, including new EPA-enforced limits on carbon dioxide emissions for coal-fueled power plants, and even tighter restrictions on mercury and sulfur dioxide, which are expected to cause a sharp rise in the cost of burning coal.

Editor’s Note: This article will be updated as more renewable energy companies offer response and reaction to the 2012 election results.

Lead image: [Spirit of America](#) via Shutterstock

<http://www.renewableenergyworld.com/rea/news/article/2012/11/renewable-energies-weigh-in-on-obama-victory>

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Boston company considers hydropower for Pittsburgh area dams

By **Rick Wills**

PITTSBURGH TRIBUNE-REVIEW

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A Boston energy company has applied to federal regulators to install hydropower on four dams in the Pittsburgh area.

Prompted by tax incentives for renewable energy, Free Flow Power is one of several companies interested in installing power on the dams.

The company is proposing to install hydropower at the Allegheny River Lock and Dam #2 in Harmarville, the Emsworth Locks & Dam, The Emsworth Back Channel Dam and the Montgomery Locks & Dam in Aliquippa.

"If a dam is already there, installing hydropower means making the most of a resource," said Alan Topalian, Free Flow's regulatory lawyer.

In August, the company filed a pre-application document with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, which licenses hydropower companies. On Nov. 15, Free Flow will hold a public hearing at the Holiday Inn Express on Campbells Run Road, Moon.

"This is very early in the process. We have submitted preliminary engineering designs. There are hundreds of variables to consider and still a lot of unknowns," Topalian said.

The proposed projects would generate about 100 megawatts of power, he said.

Two years ago, Brookfield Renewable Power Inc. of Marlborough, Mass., scrapped plans for 14 hydropower projects in this region. The company said its plans were not financially feasible.

There are now eight hydropower projects among the 23 locks and dams and 16 reservoirs, which are operated by the Pittsburgh District of the Army Corps of Engineers.

Locks 5, 6, 8 and 9 along the Allegheny River — all between Freeport and East Brady — have privately operated hydropower capacity.

Installation of hydropower on some dams could be problematic, said Jeff Hawk, a spokesman for the corps.

"We look at whether hydropower will compromise a structure, compromise our mission or harm the environment," he said.

The Montgomery dam, for example, is in poor shape. "Of the 10 gates there, only two are reliable," Hawk said.

Many dams in Pittsburgh were built during the 1930s, like the Montgomery dam, which opened in 1936. The Elizabeth Locks & Dam opened in 1907.

Interest in hydropower has grown partly as a result of the federal Renewable Electricity Production Tax Credit. It is a per-kilowatt-hour credit for electricity generated by qualified energy resources, such as wind and hydropower, said Matthew Nocella, a spokesman for the National Hydropower

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“We think hydropower is an underused and clean way of generating energy,” Nocella said.

Only 3 percent of 80,000 dams in the United States have hydropower capacity, according to the association.

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News: Business

Permits sought to study putting turbines in river

October 25, 2012

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NATCHEZ, Miss. (AP) — A company continues to study the feasibility of putting power-generating turbines in the Mississippi River.

Free Flow Power, a Boston-based company, has filed an application with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission for a preliminary permit to study the feasibility of a hydropower project near Concordia Parish, La.

Daniel Lissner with Free Flow Power tells The Natchez Democrat (<http://bit.ly/ThNNUH>) the application is essentially for the extension of previous permits the company has been granted.

The company has been in the process of studying the site, which it calls the St. Catherine Bend hydrokinetic project, for some time.

The feasibility study would determine if up to 6,382 underwater power-generating turbines could be installed on the bottom of the river. The study will also consider the feasibility of infrastructure like transmission lines.

It's part of a wider initiative in which the company is investigating.

If the project moves forward, the turbines would most likely be configured on pilings mounted on the river bottom below the navigable river channel, Lissner said.

"We have also investigated the deployment of turbines suspended from barges, but have moved away from that conceptual alternative in favor of a piling-based approach to avoid impacts with navigation that would occur on the surface of the water," he said.

The Mississippi River serves as an ideal hydrokinetic resource because of its size, flow and the maintenance protocols that keep it in its existing channels, and Lissner said the St. Catherine bend is a site of study because river bends are particularly optimal locations for turbines.

"The water accelerates around the bends, and bends tend to be deeper, so that makes for a location that you could conceivably sit more turbines mounted below the navigable channel than you could in other locations," he said.

Lissner said that the application the company has filed is for a three-year permit, and if it is granted, the company anticipates filing for a license with the FERC for the location.

Information from: The Natchez Democrat, <http://www.natchezdemocrat.com/>

From WashingtonExaminer.com



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