



STATEMENT

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For Immediate Release

NHA Praises Insights on Pumped Storage from Murkowski, Wyden, and Wellinghoff

Comments came yesterday as part of Senate Energy and Natural Resources Hearing

Washington, D.C. (December 11, 2009) – NHA applauds Sen. Lisa Murkowski (R-AK), Sen. Ron Wyden (D-OR), and Federal Energy Regulatory Commission Chairman Jon Wellinghoff for their comments about pumped storage at yesterday's U.S. Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee hearing on grid-scale energy storage chaired by Sen. Jeff Bingaman (D-NM) .

"Yesterday's hearing shows that policymakers understand the important role pumped storage can -- and must -- play in integrating new, variable renewable energy resources onto the grid and storing energy for when electricity consumers need it most," said NHA Executive Director Linda Church Ciocci. "We applaud their vision on this issue -- as they know, pumped storage and other hydropower resources support the country's energy, economic, and environmental goals."

Comments from yesterday's hearing included:

Sen. Murkowski: "Coming from Alaska, I can appreciate that pumped hydro has been the energy storage workhorse, providing the most storage capacity that can deliver power during peak demands. It often doesn't get the credit it deserves. "

Church Ciocci commented that Sen. Murkowski has long been a leader on hydropower and pumped storage issues.

"As an Alaskan, Sen. Murkowski is a strong advocate for policies that serve our national energy and environmental goals, including the development of hydropower and pumped storage resources," Church Ciocci said. "Looking at the vast potential for hydropower in Alaska, we know that her vision will serve her state -- and all Americans -- well."

Sen. Wyden: "[Energy storage] is an extraordinarily important topic...We fritter away so much of this extraordinary [renewable energy] resource because we have not set in place...the full array of storage technologies that would allow us to capture the full potential of these renewable resources."

Church Ciocchi noted that NHA is working with policymakers to ensure that national climate and energy policy reflect the contribution of and need for energy storage and commended Sen. Wyden's foresight and leadership on this issue.

"We support Sen. Wyden's bill, S. 1091, which would provide a 20 percent investment tax credit and clean renewable energy bonds (CREBs) program eligibility for grid-connected energy storage systems, including pumped storage," Church Ciocchi said. "As an organization that supports the deployment of renewable energy resources, we're eager to see policies enacted that spur the growth of existing storage technologies, like pumped storage, and the development of new applications."

Chairman Wellinghoff: "Greater fuel diversity and lower emissions cannot be achieved unless we ensure that the new energy resources are integrated into the transmission system in a manner consistent with reliable operation of the grid...The most-used bulk electricity storage technology has been pumped storage hydroelectric technology."

Church Ciocchi also noted the Chairman's commitment to examine methods to remove regulatory barriers to the adoption of storage technology.

"We're pleased that FERC is studying this issue," Church Ciocchi said. "Dozens of new pumped storage projects are currently in the development pipeline. Many of these are closed-loop, off-river technologies. Expediting the regulatory approval process for these types of projects makes sense and would greatly add to the 20,000 megawatts of storage and load-firming service that pumped storage projects currently provide. NHA looks forward to working with the Commission on this issue."

NHA President Andrew Munro, Director of External Affairs for Grant County (WA) Public Utility District, noted that yesterday's comments echo remarks he heard at last week's White House Clean Energy Economy Forum.

"Sen. Patty Murray (D-WA) noted last week that hydropower is helping the region integrate variable renewable resources and bring thousands of clean-energy megawatts onto the grid," he said. "Policymakers throughout the country are seeing that hydropower and pumped storage are effective, proven, and desirable resources for building our national energy future."