



PRESS RELEASE

National Hydropower Association
One Massachusetts Ave., NW
Suite 850
Washington, DC 20001
PH: (202) 682-1700
FX: (202) 682-9478

www.hydro.org

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Contact: Linda Church Ciocci
Office: (202) 682-1700 ext. 22
E-mail: linda@hydro.org

New EIA report demonstrates hydropower's critical – and unique – role in climate management

Washington, DC (December 11, 2008) – A new report from the U.S. Department of Energy's Energy Information Agency shows the strikingly negative impact any decreases in U.S. hydropower generation have on national efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

"This shows vividly why hydropower must be a part of our national energy and environmental strategy going forward," said Linda Church Ciocci, executive director of NHA. "Climate policy must reflect this simple equation: Hydropower generation falls and emissions increase markedly."

Emissions of Greenhouse Gases in the United States 2007 attributes much of the 86 million metric ton increase in U.S. carbon dioxide emissions between 2006 and 2007 to "...a drop in hydropower availability that led to greater reliance on fossil energy sources (coal and natural gas) for electricity generation, increasing the carbon intensity of the power supply."

The report added that a 14 percent decrease in hydropower generation over the last year – attributable mainly to drought conditions in the South – "more than offset" increases in generation from wind and nuclear power plants.

"This should be a huge wake-up call to policymakers. The decrease in hydropower generation in 2007 amounted to losing less than 1 percent of our total electric generation, yet utilities had to turn to fossil plants to replace it," Church Ciocci said. "That created a 2.9 percent increase in CO2 emissions. We must expand our hydropower resources to avoid having this kind of emissions multiplier short-circuit our climate policy."

Church Ciocci noted that the Federal Regulatory Energy Commission (FERC) and other organizations see the potential for hydropower doubling in capacity in the next 30 years. Much of this growth will come from new applications that can harness energy from moving water at sites throughout the country. These new technologies often can generate power with less water, which helps mitigate the effects of droughts and other conditions.

"EIA's report shows that we don't have time to wait. We must move more hydropower onto the grid as fast as we can, if we are to have any hope of meeting our environmental goals as a nation," Church Ciocci said. "When emissions increase at such a fast rate because of a modest decrease in hydropower – and no emissions-free technologies can make up the difference – we must secure and grow this resource as fast as possible."

For copies of the EIA report *Emissions of Greenhouse Gases in the United States 2007*, visit <ftp://ftp.eia.doe.gov/pub/oiaf/1605/cdrom/pdf/ggrpt/057307.pdf>.