



Press Release

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Interest High in New Hydropower Technologies at FERC Workshop

WASHINGTON, DC – In a packed meeting room on Dec. 6, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission held a four hour technical conference examining the regulatory, financial and environmental issues surrounding the development of ocean, tidal and instream energy projects.

The conference was the first of its kind for the Commission and was held as energy project developers, utilities, environmental interest groups and all levels of government have begun to focus attention on the new hydropower technologies as a means to provide needed clean, domestic and renewable energy.

“Over the past year we have seen increasing interest in these technologies as evidenced by numerous articles in the news media and by a surge in applications for preliminary permits here at the Commission,” stated FERC Chairman Joseph Kelliher in his opening remarks.

“These technologies have significant potential. This conference will provide a better understanding of these technologies and enable us to formulate prudent ‘next steps’ in our regulation of this nascent industry,” added Kelliher.

The technical conference explored a wide range of issues from various stakeholder perspectives. Some of the topics discussed included:

- The need for a regulatory licensing process that recognizes the unique nature of these new technologies.
- The connection between regulatory certainty and the ability to attract capital investment to a growing industry.
- The need for economic and R&D support structures to assist in information and research gathering and project development.
- The scope and extent of environmental impacts and needed studies.

NHA staff attended the technical conference along with several interested member companies, some of whom also participated in the panel sessions.

“NHA applauds the Commission for taking a leadership role and conducting a thorough conference on the new hydropower technologies. We believe the meeting provided an excellent forum to raise these issues with the Commission, staff and all stakeholders,” said Linda Church Ciocci, NHA executive director.

“While a great first start, the work did not end with this conference and more needs to be done. NHA looks forward to working with FERC and others to address the issues and challenges raised at the meeting to ensure these emerging technologies meet their full potential. Fully developed, the new hydropower technologies will represent a significant portion of the nation’s electricity portfolio,” continued Church Ciocci.

NHA is committed to improving the growth and success of the hydropower industry and the new hydropower technologies. As such, the Association has established a New Technologies Council to monitor these issues and to be a voice for ocean, tidal and instream project developers as new legislative and regulatory policies are considered. The Council is a resource for technical and regulatory expertise and is comprised of members representing utilities, both investor-owned and public, independent power project developers, and equipment suppliers and consultants.

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NHA is a non-profit national association dedicated exclusively to advancing the interests of the U.S. hydropower industry. The association represents 61 percent of domestic, non-federal hydroelectric capacity in the U.S. Its membership consists of more than 140 organizations including public utilities, investor-owned utilities, independent power producers, equipment manufacturers, environmental and engineering consultants, and attorneys.