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For Immediate Release

House subcommittee initiates action on hydropower regulatory legislation *Bill would boost hydropower development, create jobs*

Washington, D.C. (May 9, 2012) – Legislation to improve the regulatory framework for hydropower development continued moving forward on Capitol Hill today as the Energy and Power Subcommittee of the House Energy and Commerce Committee held a hearing on draft legislation based on a bipartisan bill previously introduced by Reps. Cathy McMorris Rodgers (R-WA) and Diane DeGette (D-CO).

The Hydropower Regulatory Efficiency Act of 2012 directs FERC to examine the feasibility of a two-year licensing process for certain low-impact hydropower projects, such as converting existing non-powered dams; removes small conduit projects from FERC jurisdiction; allows more small projects to qualify for the exemption process; and directs the Energy Department to study the role of pumped storage hydropower for integrating intermittent renewables. Similar legislation co-sponsored by Sens. Lisa Murkowski (R-AK) and Jeff Bingaman (D-NM), the Hydropower Improvement Act of 2011, passed the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee on a voice vote last April.

Studies conducted in recent years concluded that there is tremendous U.S. hydropower growth potential. Navigant Consulting found that 60,000 MW of hydroelectric capacity could be built by 2025, with the right policies in place. Over one million cumulative jobs could be created in pursuit of that goal. The Department of Energy recently found over 12,000 MW of untapped potential at the nation's 54,000 existing non-powered dams.

Currently, the licensing of a hydropower project can take up to five years, not including construction, according to testimony from Andrew Munro, immediate Past President of the National Hydropower Association (NHA) and Director of Customer Services at Grant County Public Utility District in Washington State. Other resources, like wind and natural gas, have shorter time frames. This puts hydropower at a competitive disadvantage when securing investment.

“Simply put, conducting business as usual will not work. The Hydropower Regulatory Efficiency Act is an immediate step forward that Congress can take to improve regulatory efficiency and tap into our nation’s undeveloped renewable energy resources in a pro-active and balanced approach,” Munro told the subcommittee.

“Small hydropower presents a substantial, largely untapped opportunity for economic development in Colorado and throughout the nation,” said Kurt Johnson, President of the Colorado Small Hydro Association (COSHA) and Principal at Telluride Energy, a small hydro development and consulting firm located in Southwestern Colorado. However, he reiterated that the regulatory burden for small and

conduit projects can make them too costly, “serving as a barrier to more rapid small hydro development.”

The bill also received support from the environmental community. Matthew Rice, Colorado Director of American Rivers, testified in support of the bill today. The group previously lent its support to the Murkowski bill last year.

“We need new renewable energy, but we need to develop it responsibly,” said John Seebach, Senior Director of Federal River Management at American Rivers. “We’re pleased to have worked with the hydropower industry on a bill that will help make hydropower regulation more efficient without sacrificing critical environmental protections.”

“Reps. McMorris’ and DeGette’s efforts have resulted in a bill that has received broad bipartisan support. It stands as a bright spot in the current energy debate in this country and we look forward to working with Congress to get this important legislation to the president’s desk,” said Linda Church Ciocci, NHA’s executive director.

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