

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

January 13, 2016

The President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

A central tenet of your Administration has been the importance of transitioning the United States to a low carbon economy. Development of new water power technologies represents a substantial opportunity for the United States to lead the world in an emerging area of science and discovery and can help meet our future electricity needs with a clean source of energy that stimulates a broad range of economic development opportunities. Therefore, we are writing to ask that you provide \$100 million in your Fiscal Year 2017 budget submission for the Department of Energy's Water Power Program to support a more aggressive technology research and development agenda.

Unfortunately, to this point the United States has not made the targeted federal investments necessary to be globally competitive in commercializing advanced water power technologies and capturing the jobs that will come with this new industrial sector. The DOE Water Power Program, with limited funding to date, supports leading-edge research, development, demonstration, and deployment efforts for, hydropower, pumped storage, and innovative marine renewable energy technologies that could generate cost-effective renewable electricity from a wide range of water resources and improve the security and reliability of the electric grid. In addition, these technologies have the potential to increase the resilience of communities to disruptive electricity events. The program invests in high-risk, early-stage technologies that, because of market considerations, the private sector is unable to address on its own. Increased federal support will hasten deployment of advanced water power technologies and also give confidence to investors and help attract private capital.

Hydropower is the nation's most affordable and reliable renewable electricity resource. With 100 Gigawatts of installed capacity (including pumped storage), hydropower accounts for seven percent on average of all U.S. annual electricity generation, and it is the largest source of renewable electricity (representing 49 percent of all renewable energy generation in 2014). But more can be done to significantly expand generation from this highly valuable, flexible, and base load energy resource. The funds we are requesting will build on years of investment to improve the energy and water use efficiency as well as the environmental performance of turbines, reduce costs of new small hydropower and conduit applications, and promote hydropower's role in the integration of variable energy resources.

Development of new advanced marine renewable energy technologies to capture just a small fraction of the significant wave, tidal, ocean current, and riverine resources located in the United

States would allow for millions of American homes and businesses to be powered with clean, reliable water power. However, increased federal funding is necessary at this stage of the sector's technology maturation pathway. At present, the U.S. is falling behind in the race to commercialize and create the new jobs that will come with this emerging industry. Early funding support, along with development of full-scale marine energy device testing centers (still unavailable here in the United States), demonstrates that the significant technological advances and competitive advantages in this industry are taking place in Europe and elsewhere. We urge your support and action to ensure that the U.S. will not have to depend on foreign suppliers for marine energy devices and miss a significant opportunity to enhance our economic competitiveness in this emerging renewable energy sector.


Expanded efforts to capture our nation's rich domestic water power resources through hydropower, pumped storage, and marine energy technologies could drive billions of dollars of investment in heavy industrial and maritime sectors, as well as in advanced electrical systems and materials common to many renewable technologies. Federal support underpins future private investments in the construction, manufacturing, engineering, and environmental science sectors and strengthens the thousands of businesses that make up the U.S. industrial supply chain. Further development of these industries has the potential to employ a substantial skilled workforce.

The activities under the DOE Water Power Program represent a critical investment in our nation's energy future. We respectfully request that you support increasing funding for DOE's Water Power Program to a level of \$100 million in Fiscal Year 2017 to ensure this promising effort does not lose momentum. Thank you in advance for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,


SUZANNE BONAMICI
Member of Congress


CHELLIE PINGREE
Member of Congress


THEODORE E. DEUTCH
Member of Congress


MARK TAKAI
Member of Congress