

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE

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Chairman Hastings: Time to Cut Red Tape to Expand the Development of Small Conduit Hydropower

WASHINGTON, D.C. – House Natural Resources Committee Chairman Doc Hastings delivered the following statement on the House floor today in support of [H.R. 678](#), the *Bureau of Reclamation Small Conduit Hydropower Development and Rural Jobs Act*. The bill is a bipartisan legislation designed to create new American jobs and expand production of clean, renewable hydropower.

“Mr. Chairman, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 678, the Bureau of Reclamation Small Conduit Hydropower Development and Rural Jobs Act.

Those of us from the Pacific Northwest know and understand the importance of hydropower and the significant role it plays in our economy. In my home state of Washington, hydropower produces 70 percent of our power and helps keep electricity prices low and affordable. It is one of the cheapest and cleanest forms of electricity and helps make other intermittent sources of renewable energy, like wind and solar, possible.

Yet too often, as is frequently the case with energy projects on federal lands, the development of new hydropower gets caught up in bureaucratic red tape and regulations.

Today’s bill, sponsored by Rep. Scott Tipton, would cut through that red tape to expand the development of small conduit hydropower. Specifically, it clears up federal agency confusion by directly authorizing hydropower development at almost 47,000 miles of Bureau of Reclamation canals. It also streamlines the regulatory process for developing small canal and pipeline hydropower projects on existing Bureau of Reclamation facilities.

I want to stress the point that these new projects will only be at existing facilities. These existing man-made facilities have already gone through extensive environmental review when they were initially built. Requiring duplicative reviews on existing facilities only imposes unnecessary delays and administrative costs.

I realize that the Bureau of Reclamation has come up with its version of streamlining since we considered this bill in the last Congress, but it’s only a theoretical version of streamlining since it has never been used six months after it was created. This bill simply streamlines the regulatory and administrative process so that water users can be free to develop hydropower at the federal canals they already operate and maintain.

This bill would help generate thousands of mega-watts of clean, cheap, abundant hydropower; bring in new revenue to the federal government, and create new American jobs. Best of all, it would do all of this at no cost to the American taxpayer.

This is exactly the type of common sense proposal that Republicans support as part of an all-of-the-above energy plan. Hydropower must be part of the solution. Families and small businesses rely on access to affordable electricity and this bill is a simple way to lower prices by expanding production of one of the best forms of clean, renewable energy.

Nearly identical legislation passed the House last Congress with bipartisan support. I hope the House will once again do so today and that the Senate will take action on this job-creating energy bill.

I want to thank Committee Members Scott Tipton, Paul Gosar and Jim Costa for their tremendous work on this bill and for being strong champions of small-scale hydropower production.

I reserve the balance of my time.”

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