

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE REPUBLICANS

CONGRESSMAN DOC HASTINGS, RANKING MEMBER

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Thursday, July 29, 2010

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Republicans Stress the Importance of Protecting and Expanding Low-Cost, Carbon-Free Hydropower

WASHINGTON D.C. – Today, during a Natural Resources Water and Power Subcommittee hearing on “*Investment in Small Hydropower: Prospects for Expanding Low Impact and Affordable Hydropower Generation in the West,*” Republicans highlighted the necessity of protecting existing hydropower resources and making it an essential part of an all-of-the-above energy plan.

Hydropower is a clean, renewable, non-emitting source of energy that provides low-cost electricity and helps reduce carbon emissions. It is more efficient than any other form of electricity generation and offsets more carbon emissions than all other renewable energy sources combined. It accounts for 67% of the nation’s total renewable electricity generation. In addition to providing low-cost electricity, multi-purpose dams provide water for irrigation, wildlife, recreation and barge transportation and offer flood control benefits.

Unfortunately, environmental mandates and Endangered Species Act requirements have increased costs and lead to never-ending litigation. While many environmental groups advocate for the removal of hydroelectric dams, this would have devastating impacts on Western economies - raising energy prices for families and businesses – and the lost power would mostly have to be replaced with more expensive carbon-emitting resources. The Northwest Power and Conservation Council estimates that the removal of the Snake River dams in the Pacific Northwest would add over four million tons of CO2 to the atmosphere each year and others estimate show it would take six coal-fired or eighteen gas-fired power units to replace their energy output.

“Existing federal hydropower facilities have kept the lights on and powered our farms for generations, yet they are under constant assault. My region is a case study of how the environmental movement has undermined the existing hydropower system...For example, the four lower Snake River dams continue to be a target by environmental litigants and are now back on the table for potential removal due to the actions of this Administration. Yet, the fact remains that dam removal is an extreme action that would only increase the carbon footprint and increase electricity rates during tough economic times – and that wouldn’t actually recover endangered fish,” said **Natural Resources Committee Ranking Member Doc Hastings (WA-04)**.

“We must beware of squandering our vast hydroelectric capacity by subordinating it to

staggeringly more expensive and unreliable energy systems that the government is currently promoting. For example, a concerted effort is being undertaken by the administration to destroy four hydro-electric dams on the Klamath River in the name of restoring salmon populations. This effort is estimated to cost well over a half-billion dollars and will require consumers to purchase much more expensive replacement power for 155 megawatts of generating capacity – enough for over 150,000 homes. On both large scale and small scale hydroelectric projects, we absolutely must restore some modicum of rationality and commonsense to our public policy. We cannot continue to ignore our ability to restore endangered species populations through aquaculture, hydroponics and husbandry at a fraction of the cost, and on a vastly greater scale, than those measures now being imposed by current laws,” **Water and Power Subcommittee Ranking Member Tom McClintock.**

“Hydropower is the original green energy and is still the highest source of non-carbon emitting energy in the world. While we must protect our existing hydropower infrastructure, we also must promote new efforts designed to produce more hydropower from smaller sources. The thousands of miles of irrigation canals, pipes, and ditches in the West are an obvious opportunity for new hydropower generation, but one-size-fits-all federal regulations make projects throughout the country financially prohibitive by imposing unnecessary and outdated Federal Energy Regulatory Commission rules. This is why I am introducing the Small-Scale Hydropower Enhancement Act of 2010 – to exempt any conduit-type hydropower project generating less than one and a half megawatts from FERC jurisdiction,” **Rep. Adrian Smith (NE-03).**

“In Eastern Washington – and throughout America – the benefits of hydropower aren’t being fully tapped because of billions of dollars in excessive regulatory costs to mitigate unproven environmental effects. In the Pacific Northwest, for example, 30 percent of wholesale power rates go to endangered species compliance. That’s why today I’ve once again introduced a bill, the Endangered Species Compliance and Transparency Act, that would require Power Marketing Administrations to separate out the costs of each customer’s share of complying with the Endangered Species Act. This bill will contribute to better decision-making about the use of hydropower and make hydropower more available to meet our economy’s growing energy needs,” **Rep. Cathy McMorris Rodgers (WA-05).**

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