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Chairman Hastings Introduces Bill to Protect and Promote Clean, Renewable Hydropower

WASHINGTON, D.C. – House Natural Resources Committee Chairman Doc Hastings (WA-04) today introduced [H.R. 6247](#), *the Saving Our Dams and New Hydropower Development and Jobs Act*. The bill protects and promotes hydropower resources by ending practices that diminish existing hydropower, cutting regulatory red-tape, generating new non-federal funding for new projects and improving transparency. Hydropower is a clean, renewable form of energy that accounts for 70 percent of electricity in Washington state, seven percent of electricity generated in the U.S. and prevents 200 million annual metric tons of carbon emissions.

“This bill represents a clear vision and common sense reforms for how our Nation can protect existing hydropower and jumpstart new hydropower in order to produce more of this emissions-free and low-cost renewable energy,” said Chairman Doc Hastings. “This bill would officially recognize hydropower as renewable energy and help eliminate government roadblocks and frivolous litigation that stifle development. Hydropower is an essential part of an all-of-the-above energy plan, and its expansion would create thousands of new American jobs, grow our economy and protect the environment.”

Highlights of [H.R. 6247](#), *the Saving Our Dams and New Hydropower Development and Jobs Act*:

- Declares that hydropower is a renewable energy source.
- Prohibits federal funding from being used to remove, breach or study the removal or breaching of any hydropower dam unless explicitly authorized by Congress.
- Prohibits federal funding to organizations that have engaged in dam removal or hydropower-decreasing litigation against the federal government.
- Prohibits federal funding for new activities proposed in Energy Secretary Steven Chu’s March 16, 2012 [memorandum](#) mandating new missions for the Power Marketing Administrations until an agency report is completed to justify such activities and Congress authorizes the new activities. Over 160 bipartisan House members and Senators have [expressed concerns](#) with these vague new missions.

- Prohibits the Bureau of Reclamation and other federal agencies from bypassing hydropower turbines (through spills or pulse flows) if a state has declared a drought emergency or if these actions would harm endangered fish.
- Improves transparency by providing that each Power Marketing Administration to estimate and report costs related to federal fish and wildlife acts, including costs relating to lost power generation, to their power customers on a monthly basis.
- Advances new hydropower through new water storage by allowing non-federal parties to complete studies and finance projects.
- Creates a new, innovative funding source to build new water and power infrastructure.
- Authorizes hydropower development on existing, man-made Bureau of Reclamation water canals and pipes. This provision is based legislation by Rep. Scott Tipton (H.R. 2842), which [passed](#) the House with bipartisan support.
- Addresses burdensome costs and regulations imposed by the Interior and Commerce Departments on licensing and re-licensing non-federal hydropower dams.
- Protects electricity transmission lines from catastrophic forest fires by allowing electricity rights-of-way holders on federal lands to remove insect-infested trees or other hazardous fuels within 500-ft.

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