



NEWS RELEASE

25 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W. · Suite 450 · Washington, D.C., 20001 · 202/682-1700 · www.hydro.org

Media Contact: Matt Bevens
202/292-6972 · mbevans@gpgdc.com

Kathryn Steele
202/682-1700 ex. 19 · Kathryn@hydro.org

For Immediate Release

Bipartisan Bill Introduced to Boost U.S. Hydropower Production, Jobs *Hydropower Improvement Act would Expand Safe, Reliable, Clean Baseload Power*

Washington, D.C. (March 17, 2011) – As the nation looks for new sources of reliable clean energy, Energy and Natural Resources Committee Ranking Member Lisa Murkowski (R-AK) today introduced bipartisan legislation to accelerate the deployment of hydropower projects across the country. The Hydropower Improvement Act has nine original cosponsors, including Energy and Natural Resources Committee Chairman Jeff Bingaman (D-NM) and Washington Senator Maria Cantwell (D), making hydropower a major area of consensus on energy in the 112th Congress.

“It is now all too clear that America needs a consensus policy on energy that can help keep prices low, create jobs and ensure a safe supply of power,” **Senator Murkowski** said. “Clean, safe and domestic hydropower can help us reach our shared clean energy goals. Our bill achieves common sense regulatory reform, spurs economic growth and takes advantage of hydropower’s position as the country’s leading source of clean, renewable energy.”

“This bill allows us to highlight the potential for development of additional hydropower resources in an environmentally responsible way,” said **Senator Bingaman**. “It includes provisions that address the potential for hydropower development from smaller sources that are available, even in a dry state like New Mexico. Additionally, the bill emphasizes the need to improve efficiency at existing facilities and to tap into the hydropower potential at existing non-powered dams. I appreciate the ability to work with Senator Murkowski and the other members of the committee on this bipartisan bill.”

“Emissions-free hydropower is the backbone of Washington’s economy, providing around three quarters of our electricity, and keeping our rates among the lowest in the country,” **Senator Cantwell** said. “This bipartisan bill will help find ways to increase our nation’s hydropower capacity without building new dams, improving air quality while creating new clean energy jobs.”

The National Hydropower Association applauds each original co-sponsor for their early support of this job-creating clean energy bill. In addition to Senators Lisa Murkowski (R-AK), Jeff Bingaman (D-NM) and Maria Cantwell (D-WA), the list of co-sponsors includes: Mark Begich (D-AK), Mike Crapo (R-ID), Patty Murray (D-WA), James Risch (R-ID), Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI) and Ron Wyden (D-OR).

The Hydropower Improvement Act sets a dynamic hydropower agenda for the nation. The bill will advance project deployment (from conduit and small hydro to non-powered dams to pumped storage) by requiring better interagency coordination; through funding of competitive grants for increased production; and with continued support for research and development activities. For more detailed information, see NHA’s Fact Sheet on the bill.

“Hydropower has more multi-region and bipartisan support than any other clean energy technology. It is critical to our clean energy future that this legislation is passed as soon as possible,” said **National Hydropower Association Executive Director Linda Church Ciocci**. “Hydropower is already responsible for nearly seven percent of total U.S. electricity generation and two-thirds of our renewable electricity. This bill recognizes the vital role of hydropower as an affordable, reliable, available and sustainable domestic energy source.”

In addition to growing the domestic supply of clean energy, local job creation is a primary focus of the legislation. Already responsible for over 300,000 jobs, a recent study by Navigant Consulting, Inc. has shown that with the right policies, hydropower could create over 1.4 million cumulative direct, indirect and induced jobs by 2025.

“The Hydropower Improvement Act will bolster the positive economic and job creation benefits of hydropower projects, supply chain companies and low-cost hydroelectricity in all fifty states,” said **NHA President Andrew Munro, also Director of External Affairs for Washington State’s Grant County PUD**. “The U.S. hydropower industry supports President Obama’s goal of generating 80 percent of the nation’s electricity with clean energy sources by 2035. Hydropower will play a critical role in reaching that goal and this bill will help America get there sooner.”

For more information, see www.hydro.org.

###