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For Immediate Release

Alaska governor, senators address hydropower industry's regional meeting

Girdwood, AK (August 31, 2011) – Interest in hydropower is growing in Alaska. Nearly 200 industry professionals and state and federal policymakers gathered in Girdwood at the National Hydropower Association's Alaska Regional Meeting over the past two days to discuss financing, navigating the regulatory process, and public policy that affects new hydropower project development in the Last Frontier.

NHA was pleased to welcome Alaska Governor Sean Parnell (R), United States Senators Lisa Murkowski (R) and Mark Begich (D). Each addressed attendees during the morning plenary sessions. Also in attendance was Alaska State Senator Lesil McGuire (R), who participated on a panel discussion of funding mechanisms to ensure construction of more Alaskan hydropower projects.

Gov. Parnell provided opening remarks yesterday morning, stressing the importance of the new development to Alaska's economy and electricity needs.

"Alaska's roaring rivers can light and heat our homes during the dark winter nights. The Susitna-Watana Hydro Project is part of a comprehensive energy package that will grow economic opportunity for Alaskans. Hydro power will put us far down the path to achieving our goal of 50% renewable energy for electricity by 2025. I look forward to sharing and learning about the benefits of hydro for Alaska and the nation."

Sen. Murkowski followed on Parnell's comments and sought to dispel the myth that there is no further potential for hydropower development in the United States. She also provided attendees with an update on legislation she sponsored, the Hydropower Improvement Act of 2011.

"I think we all recognize that it is a misconception that the hydropower resource is tapped out," said Murkowski. "In Alaska, hydro already supplies 24 percent of the state's electricity needs and over 200 promising sites for further hydropower development have been identified that have the potential to produce hundreds, if not thousands, of megawatts of power – Susitna being just the largest and Lake Chakachamna the second largest of those sites."

This morning, Sen. Begich opened the day reinforcing how vital hydropower's low-carbon generation and low costs are to the people and environment of Alaska.

"If you want to be serious about renewable energy, hydropower has to be part of the discussion," said Sen. Begich. "Nowhere is that more true than Alaska, which holds over a third of our country's untapped hydropower. Hydroelectric power development in Alaska is a win for ratepayers, our

communities, and the environment. We can develop fish-friendly hydro sites that lower ratepayers' costs. It's that simple."

NHA's Executive Director Linda Church Ciocci thanked the special guests for attending.

"I thank Governor Parnell, Senators Murkowski and Begich, and State Senator McGuire for joining NHA here in Girdwood. Their attendance demonstrates that they understand the potential hydropower holds for Alaska and the United States in meeting future energy demands and providing quality American jobs in this struggling economy.

"We're also very pleased by the record attendance. With nearly 200 participating in the last two days of discussion, it is clear that the hydropower industry is vibrant and ready to innovate, electrify and employ America's economic recovery."

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