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## For Immediate Release

### House unanimously passes bill promoting hydropower growth

Washington, D.C. (February 13, 2013) – The House of Representatives passed its first piece of energy legislation in the 113<sup>th</sup> Congress, approving for a second time legislation to improve the regulatory environment for hydropower development and help tap some of the estimated 60,000 MW of potential hydro capacity. The vote was 422-0.

“NHA applauds today’s passage of the *Hydropower Regulatory Efficiency Act*. The unanimous vote demonstrates that policymakers view hydropower as a solution to the nation’s energy challenges and believe we should expand its contribution to America’s energy mix,” said Linda Church Ciocci, Executive Director of the National Hydropower Association, the industry’s trade association based in Washington, D.C.

The legislation, H.R. 267, promotes the development of small hydropower and conduit projects and aims to shorten regulatory timeframes of certain other low-impact hydropower projects, such as adding power generation to the nation’s existing non-powered dams and closed-loop pumped storage

Hydropower currently provides about two-thirds of the nation’s renewable electricity, with 100,000 MW of installed capacity from coast to coast, and employs approximately 300,000 workers. Estimates done by Navigant Consulting indicate that 60,000 MW of hydropower could be added with the right policies in place, while creating 1.4 million cumulative jobs. The legislation would unlock some of that untapped potential.

House action on the bill has been swift. It was introduced less than a month ago by Reps. Cathy McMorris Rodgers (R-WA) and Diana DeGette (D-CO), who were joined by seven original bipartisan co-sponsors. The House Energy and Commerce Committee favorably reported the bill out on a unanimous vote during its first meeting of the new Congress on Jan. 22.

McMorris Rodgers and DeGette led the charge on the legislation last Congress as well. Though it passed the House unanimously in July 2012, the Senate did not act before the end of the year.

“Reps. McMorris Rodgers and DeGette have shown tremendous leadership. We truly appreciate their dedication and are proud to count them among the hydropower champions in Congress,” said Ciocci.

“I’m so proud the House has passed a bipartisan bill that will significantly advance our ‘all-of-the-above’ energy strategy,” said McMorris Rodgers. “In Eastern Washington, hydropower plays a pivotal role – whether it’s conventional, small, or conduit hydro – it provides 75 percent of electricity to the Pacific Northwest and represents a unique opportunity for job creation and energy production. It’s clean, reliable, renewable and affordable. Unleashing American ingenuity to increase hydropower

production will lower energy costs and help create thousands of jobs. The future of American energy independence depends on the development of an ‘all of the above’ energy approach – and I’m proud that hydro is finally on its way to being part of it.”

“I’m so pleased that today our House colleagues joined with us in affirming the importance of hydropower to our nation,” said DeGette. “This bill will expand renewable and affordable hydropower and create good jobs for American families. I urge my colleagues in the Senate to act on this important piece of bipartisan energy legislation.”

The bill now heads to the Senate, where prospects for action are high. Senate Energy Committee Chairman Ron Wyden (D-OR) and the committee’s Ranking Member Lisa Murkowski (R-AK) have signaled that hydropower is one area on which they intend to act. Murkowski introduced and Wyden co-sponsored a similar bill, S. 629, the *Hydropower Improvement Act*, last Congress.

“Hydropower enjoys strong bipartisan support on both sides of Capitol Hill. NHA looks forward to working with Senate leaders to enact hydropower regulatory improvements this year,” Ciocci said.

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