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For Immediate Release

Murkowski introduces bipartisan bill to improve hydropower regulatory process *Hydropower continues to receive bipartisan support on Capitol Hill*

Washington, D.C. (March 13, 2013) – Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee Ranking Member Lisa Murkowski (R-AK) today re-introduced the *Hydropower Improvement Act*, continuing the recent flurry of bipartisan action to improve the regulatory process for hydropower projects.

The legislation 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 promotes developing some of that potential.

“NHA applauds Sen. Murkowski’s continued leadership to promote hydropower development through a more efficient regulatory process,” said Linda Church Ciocci, Executive Director of the National Hydropower Association. “Hydropower is an important part of a diverse energy portfolio that provides American’s with reliable, affordable clean energy. We look forward to working with Sen. Murkowski and the Energy and Natural Resource Committee to move this and other pieces of hydropower legislation through the Senate.”

“Hydropower is, and must continue to be, a major part of our energy solution. It is the largest source of renewable electricity generation in the United States, and our most cost-effective, clean energy option,” said Murkowski. “Hydro already supplies 24 percent of Alaska’s electricity needs and our state has identified more than 200 promising sites for further hydropower development. There is great potential for additional hydropower development across the country.”

Senate Energy Committee Chairman Ron Wyden (D-OR) and a bipartisan group of 5 other senators joined Murkowski in introducing the legislation: James Risch (R-ID), Maria Cantwell (D-WA), Mike Crapo (R-ID), Patty Murray (D-WA), and Mark Begich (D-AK).

Murkowski had previously introduced the legislation in 2011. It won bipartisan committee support, but was not considered by the full Senate.

The House of Representatives last month unanimously passed similar legislation sponsored by Reps. Cathy McMorris Rodgers (R-WA) and Diana DeGette (D-CO). That bill has been referred to the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee as well.

“Hydropower regulatory legislation has bicameral, bipartisan support. I urge the Senate to quickly send these common sense improvements to the president’s desk,” said Ciocci.

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