



Hydropower

July 2018

Key Messages:

- As the nation's largest renewable and carbon-free resource, NWPPA supports all hydropower as a clean, cost effective and safe energy resource.
- NWPPA urges Congress to keep working to enact hydropower relicensing reform, such as the House-passed H.R. 3043 (McMorris Rodgers) or S. 1460 (Murkowski-Cantwell).
- NWPPA also supports quick consideration of S. 724 – a bill that would allow FERC to extend existing hydropower licenses and preliminary permits without a case-by-case Act of Congress.

Background:

Hydropower is a critical resource for our member utilities, representing close to 60% of our regional power supply and for many of our members, 100% of their generation resources. Hydropower is the foundation of our regional energy portfolio providing clean, renewable and reliable baseload power that fuels our homes and economy. Over the last two decades, this critical resource has also provided support for the integration of new, intermittent renewable resources as well.

NWPPA supports legislation to make hydropower licensing a timely, efficient, and affordable process, to include credit for early action and to establish FERC as the coordinating agency for setting licensing schedules, studies, and resolving conflicting licensing requirements.

H.R. 3034, the "Hydropower Modernization Act of 2017," passed the House of Representatives in November, 2017. The legislation would make FERC the lead agency on hydropower relicensing. FERC would be authorized to create a schedule and coordinate other federal, state, and local agencies with authorities and responsibilities under federal law. While lawmakers hoped for bipartisan support, Democratic leadership opposed the bill. NWPPA believes there is room for some compromise, but it is not clear what changes would need to be made to earn Democratic support in the House.

Meanwhile, the Senate energy bill negotiated between Energy and Natural Resources Committee Chairman Lisa Murkowski (R-AK) and Ranking Member Maria Cantwell (D-WA) contains similar language on hydropower relicensing, but has not advanced in the Senate.

Recently, the Senate recently passed legislation that include provisions authorizing FERC to extend existing hydropower licenses and preliminary hydropower permits without the need for

a case-by-case Act of Congress. The House passed a similar bill early this Congress and need now consider S. 724 on the House floor for final passage. NWPPA recently urged the House Energy & Commerce committee to act quickly to consider S. 724, the bill that would provide FERC with these important authorizations.