



House Energy Approves Significant Hydropower Reform

Bills would cut unnecessarily burdensome reviews, relicensing

WASHINGTON, June 28, 2017 -- The House Energy and Commerce Committee approved two bills that would decidedly promote some of the most promising means of expanding hydropower.

One from Reps. Richard Hudson (R-N.C.) and Diana DeGette (D-Colo) [cuts federal review periods for small conduit \(or energy-recovery\) projects](#) that would use turbines to generate power on existing man-made infrastructure, including municipal pipes and irrigation canals. A second bill from Rep. Cathy McMorris Rodgers (R-Wash) [aims to speeds up licensing and relicensing](#) of the roughly 400 hydropower projects that will be up for relicensing by 2030, representing 18,000 megawatts of capacity. Her bill would also clear the way for additions to domestic hydropower capacity, including generation to non-powered dams and closed-loop pumped storage.

“Once again House Republicans are showing they are serious in helping one of the cleanest and more reliable forms of domestic energy,” ClearPath Action Executive Director Rich Powell said.

“These bills are clear examples of how conservative, free-market principles can drive clean energy development,” ClearPath Action Policy Associate Justin Ong added.

The U.S. hydropower fleet produces enough electricity to power more than 20 million households each year, making it the fourth largest electricity source after natural gas, coal and nuclear. While development peaked in the 1960s, a Department of Energy study found that 50 percent more U.S. hydropower capacity, amounting to 50GW, is possible by 2050.

Future projects will not require large new dams that were iconic of past decades. Virtually all of the new development opportunities are concentrated at existing water infrastructure and pumped-storage hydropower. Pumped storage hydropower is also already the most common type of grid-scale energy storage and there is more than 13GW of new capacity that has been proposed.

ClearPath Action is a 501(c)(4) working to create and influence conservative clean energy solutions. Find out more at clearpath.org and clearpathaction.org . Also follow us on Twitter: [@JayFaison1](https://twitter.com/JayFaison1), [@powellrich](https://twitter.com/powellrich) and [@ClearPathAction](https://twitter.com/ClearPathAction).