

SENATOR LISA MURKOWSKI
OPENING STATEMENT OF
HYDROPOWER AND ENERGY EFFICIENCY HEARING
April 23, 2013

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for convening this hearing to consider hydropower and energy efficiency legislation. I've long been a strong hydropower proponent. I consider hydropower to be our hardest working renewable resource and one that often gets overlooked in the clean energy debate. To me there is no question that our largest source of renewable electricity is, and must continue to be, part of our energy solution.

The good news is that the hydropower resource is finally getting the recognition it deserves. There's broad bipartisan and bicameral support for the two hydropower measures before us today. The Hydropower Improvement Act, my legislation to advance conventional hydropower, has been cosponsored by Chairman Wyden and Senators Risch, Cantwell and Udall, all members of this Committee, as well as Senators Begich, Bennett, Crapo, and Murray. And H.R. 267, the companion bill sponsored by Representatives McMorris-Rodgers and DeGette, has already passed the House again this year – with absolutely no opposition – by a vote of 422-0. The legislation is supported by the National Hydropower Association, American Rivers, and a host of other organizations.

The other hydropower measure before us today, S. 306, the Bureau of Reclamation Small Conduit Hydropower Development and Rural Jobs Act, sponsored by Senators Barrasso and Risch, would spur on the development of hydropower at Reclamation's existing canals and conduits. H.R. 678, the companion legislation sponsored by Representative Tipton, recently passed the House overwhelmingly by a vote of 416-7. We've also received strong support from stakeholders such as the American Public Power Association, the Family Farm Alliance, the Oregon Water Resources Congress and the Colorado River Energy Distributors Association.

As with hydropower, I continue to believe that efficiency is part of an "all-of-the-above" energy plan. I also see it as a "bottom line" issue – an area where it is in our best interest to find agreement due to the current fiscal constraints we face as a nation. I'd like to commend Senators Portman and Shaheen for again coming together to introduce the Energy Savings and Industrial Competitiveness Act, legislation that aims to increase the efficiency of our homes and buildings, as well as for the industrial sector and federal agencies. This measure is supported by some 200 organizations, including a wide range of efficiency advocates and manufacturers.

It is my hope that we can move these bills quickly through the Committee and the full Senate so we can provide the President with the opportunity to sign meaningful energy legislation into law.