**Northwest Public Power Association**

**Resolution 2023-02**

**In Support of All Hydropower as a Renewable Resource**

**Background**

NWPPA supports hydropower, the foundation of the Northwest region’s energy supply, as a clean, renewable, cost-effective, carbon-free and safe energy resource.  Multi-purpose dams conserve and manage water to meet the needs of the people and the nation’s economy.

In addition to energy, hydropower provides valuable services to the electric grid which support reliability and the integration of renewable resources including wind and solar through capacity, flexibility, ramping, storage, and frequency response. As a carbon-free resource, hydroelectric generation reduces the need to import and burn additional fossil fuels to meet consumer electric demand.

Hydropower is one of the nation’s largest renewable and carbon-free resources and represents a significant portion of electrical generation capacity. The Department of Energy’s *2016 Hydropower Vision* report found that hydropower could grow from 101 GW to nearly 150 GW by 2050. However, public policy and market design are not keeping up with the needs of the future grid, threatening the viability of new and even *existing* hydropower projects. DOE also commissioned the Hydropower Value Study in January 2021 that detailed the contributions of hydroelectric generation to reliability, economic efficiency, and flexibility to the electric grid. If public policy and market design fail to recognize the value of hydropower to the electric grid, reinvestment in these resources is at risk.

Among the key benefits of the federal hydropower system are clean air, substantial production of dispatchable energy, and no greenhouse gas emissions. As a zero-carbon generation resource, hydropower will be a key resource to help meet Clean Energy Standard goals. This gives the Northwest an environmental edge unmatched elsewhere in the country where power production is largely from fossil fuels. Hydro generation is unique in its ability to instantly increase or decrease generation in maintaining the constant balance of generation and electric demand, which is necessary for power system reliability. Existing hydropower offers the added benefit of avoiding the carbon and costs of bringing other new renewable sources online.

**NWPPA’s Position**

* NWPPA supports Congress’ recognition of all hydropower, including existing hydropower, as a renewable resource.
* NWPPA supports market design that values hydropower’s baseload availability, flexible capacity, other ancillary services, and carbon-free attributes.
* NWPPA supports explicit inclusion of hydropower as a zero-carbon electric generation resource that meets the requirements to be included in any Clean Energy Standard considered by Congress and/or the Administration.
* NWPPA supports maintaining federal renewable and other clean energy incentives that are equally available to hydropower and accessible to public power utilities and rural electric cooperatives.
* NWPPA supports efforts by Congress to modernize hydropower licensing by designating Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) as the lead agency for purposes of coordinating all federal authorizations and complying with the National Environmental Policy Act.
* NWPPA supports reducing the time required for the hydropower licensing process by better coordinating federal authorizations, adding schedule discipline, improving trial-type hearings and fact-finding, requiring agencies to equally consider other public purposes of a project when setting conditions, and reducing duplicative study requests and those not tied to project operations.
* NWPPA supports hydropower regulatory reforms that require mandatory conditions and prescriptions be accompanied by written rationale tied to each prescribed project nexus.
* NWPPA supports effective FERC implementation of Federal Power Act section 36, which will encourage pre-licensing investments at existing hydropower projects by crediting them toward longer license terms.
* NWPPA supports federal investments in advanced hydropower technologies through research, development, and incentives. A major opportunity for increasing hydro-system output is reducing unplanned outages and increasing hydropower’s contribution to grid reliability and resiliency.
* NWPPA supports federal, state, and local efforts to enact policies that expedite the voluntary removal and redeposit of debris and sediment runoff into hydropower reservoirs as a result of frequent and extreme weather events. Accelerated sediment buildup can degrade water quality, accelerate the wear and tear of turbines, and reduce overall power output. Facilitating disposal of sediment for beneficial use on adjoining federal lands should be encouraged and streamlined.
* NWPPA opposes efforts to remove productive dams that provide, or have the potential to provide, economic hydropower generation.

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