

U.S. House endorses \$40 million for DOE hydro research

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WASHINGTON 7/20/09 (PennWell) -- The U.S. House has endorsed a \$33.3 billion energy and water appropriations bill that includes spending \$40 million on the Department of Energy's hydropower research and development program.

Although the House Appropriations Committee approved spending only \$30 million on hydro R&D for the 2010 budget year that begins Oct. 1,, Rep. Candice Miller, R-Mich., successfully amended the bill in floor action July 17, 2009, to add \$10 million. (HydroWorld 7/9/09) That brought funding for the line item back up to \$40 million, the amount appropriated by Congress for the current year.

"The Water Power energy program is a program designed to develop, test, and evaluate new water technologies and address barriers to development of hydrokinetics and hydropower," Miller said on the House floor. "The program conducts important research and development and deploys new, innovative water technologies in order to get those products on the market in an expedient, cost-efficient, and environmentally responsible manner. Additionally, this program allows for testing and modeling of existing technologies."

While hydropower only accounts for 5.75 percent of total energy needs, Miller said, it makes up 71 percent of total renewable electricity and produces enough electricity to power 28 million households.

The House approved the Miller amendment, 431-1, and went on to pass the full energy and water spending bill, H.R.3183, on a 320-97 vote. The measure now goes to the Senate, whose own Appropriations Committee endorsed \$60 million for hydropower research and development. (HydroWorld 7/10/09)

House allots \$5 million for hydro at six BuRec sites

The House also approved, 432-0, an amendment by Rep. Doc Hastings, R-Wash., to allot \$5

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million to the Bureau of Reclamation with a mandate to begin implementing prospective hydroelectric facilities at BuRec installations identified in a study ordered by the Energy Policy Act of 2005.

In the study, which was completed in 2007, BuRec found six sites with physical and economic conditions sufficient to warrant further exploration for additional hydro development totaling 53 MW. (HydroWorld 7/16/07) The Corps of Engineers identified 58 sites based on similar criteria. It said 819 MW of capacity could be developed at 47 facilities that lack hydropower, and 358 MW could be added at 11 facilities with existing hydropower.

"This report will require the Bureau of Reclamation to determine where new hydropower projects can be added to the agency's existing water supply facilities," Hastings said. "... While the agency failed to look at potential projects on small canals and laterals, it did find six larger opportunities to generate ... from new hydropower facilities. To date, the Bureau of Reclamation has not implemented one aspect of this report."

The 2007 report may be obtained from the BuRec Internet site at www.usbr.gov/power/data/data.html, under "Potential Hydroelectric Development at Existing Federal Facilities for Section 1834 of the Energy Policy Act of 2005."