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**Hearing Highlights Importance of Hydropower in the Northwest**

(Washington, D.C.) Today, energy industry experts from the Northwest and around the country testified in front of the Water and Power Subcommittee about the importance of hydropower in meeting our current and future domestic energy needs.

Congresswoman Cathy McMorris Rodgers is the Ranking Republican on the Subcommittee and requested today's hearing.

"This was our first step toward giving the American people and those inside the Beltway much-needed information about hydropower," Congresswoman McMorris Rodgers said. "Hydroelectric dams across the West and especially in Washington State provide us with clean, affordable, and renewable energy. In fact, dams provide nearly two-thirds of Washington State's electricity. At a time of growing energy demand, it makes no sense to throw this clean energy source away."

"The assumption is that hydropower in the Northwest is tapped out. This is false," said Washington State Senator Bob Morton (R-Kettle Falls). "With more water storage, we could trap the thousands of acre feet of water from the snow that is melting right now—and turn that into hydropower."

"Hydropower is the largest renewable electric resource in the U.S., providing approximately nine percent of U.S. total summer capacity," Avista Corporation Director of Environmental Affairs Director Bruce Howard testified. "Any adverse environmental impact of hydropower on aquatic resources have been substantially reduced or eliminated through the relicensing process, new and innovative technology and the application of key environmental laws."

"My message today is simple: there is tremendous, untapped emissions-free hydroelectric generation potential in the U.S." said Grant County PUD General Manager Tim Culbertson testified. "Too often hydropower is overlooked or taken for granted. This is an unfortunate oversight because hydropower, which does not generate any greenhouse gas emissions, is a domestic resource that deserves more attention as part of the nation's renewable energy supply."

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