



**INTERNATIONAL
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June 25, 2015

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski
Chair
Energy and Natural Resources Committee
United State Senate
304 Senate Dirksen Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Maria Cantwell
Ranking Member
Energy and Natural Resources Committee
United States Senate
304 Senate Dirksen Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chair Murkowski and Ranking Member Cantwell:

On behalf of the approximately 750,000 active members and retirees of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW), I write in support of the *Hydropower Improvement Act of 2015* (S. 1236), legislation to reform the relicensing and regulation of hydroelectric generation.

As the United States moves toward a lower-carbon future, it has become clear that hydropower – the original renewable energy resource – has become burdened with excessive, time-consuming, and costly regulation. Nowhere is this truer than in the relicensing process where procedures for renewal have become difficult and duplicative. Lacking in transparency and efficiency, the process to relicense an existing hydropower facility can, in some cases, take more than a decade.

To help address the issue of relicensing existing carbon-free hydro generation facilities, the *Hydropower Improvement Act of 2015* makes a number of licensing process coordination improvements aimed at addressing permitting backlogs. If adopted by Congress and signed by the President, S. 1236 would improve administrative efficiency and transparency, reduce duplicative oversight, and promote efficient and timely decision-making in the relicensing process.

Hydro generation continues to be a very viable renewable energy resource, which is an essential component of an “all of the above” energy policy. Moreover, being a carbon-free source of electricity, it is incumbent on the federal government to support the efficient and timely relicensing of existing hydropower facilities. I appreciate your attention to this issue and support of the *Hydropower Improvement Act of 2015*.

Sincerely yours,

Lonnie Stephenson
International President

LRS:mlm

