

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

November 10, 2016

The Honorable Hal Rogers  
Chairman  
House Committee on Appropriations  
Capitol Building, H-305  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Nita Lowey  
Ranking Member  
House Appropriations Committee, Democrats  
1016 Longworth House Office Building,  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Mike Simpson  
Chairman  
House Appropriations Subcommittee on  
Energy and Water Development, and Related  
Agencies  
2362-B Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Marcy Kaptur  
Ranking Member  
House Appropriations Subcommittee on  
Energy and Water Development, and Related  
Agencies  
1016 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Rogers, Ranking Member Lowey, Chairman Simpson, and Ranking Member Kaptur:

We write in support of retaining language to ensure the continued operation of federally-owned and operated hydroelectric dams and infrastructure in any appropriations legislation considered in the final days of the 114<sup>th</sup> Congress. In both Fiscal Year (FY) 2016 and 2017, the House adopted language to prohibit the use of taxpayer funds to remove any federally-owned or operated dam. During consideration of the *FY2016 Energy & Water Development Appropriations Act* (H.R. 2028), Representatives Gosar and Newhouse offered an amendment to this effect that was adopted by voice vote. The following year the House Appropriations Committee included this language in the base text of H.R. 5055 in the form of Section 507.

Hydropower is a clean, affordable, and carbon-neutral energy source, one that produces sustainable, renewable, and low-cost energy to power homes, businesses, and cities across the country. Hydroelectric dams also provides numerous additional benefits besides energy production, such as water storage, irrigation, and flood control, as well as conservation, recreation, and navigational benefits. Recent efforts to remove federal hydropower dams and infrastructure is misguided and does not comport with the shared goal of increased domestic energy production that will lead to greater U.S. energy security and independence.

Despite almost eight years of unabashed support for renewable energy, and countless policies purportedly intended to promote the development of clean sources of energy, the Obama administration has taken extreme steps to hinder future hydroelectric energy production – and more recently has made clear its intent to destroy existing hydroelectric dams – rather than build new ones. This is extremely troubling, especially given hydropower’s critical role in the U.S. energy portfolio as a reliable, carbon-neutral, and abundant energy source.

The administration has continually advocated for increased hydropower production, yet its recent actions betray these public sentiments. In April 2014, the Department of Energy (DOE)

announced a new initiative called *Hydropower Vision* that is intended to “establish the analytical basis for an ambitious roadmap to usher in a new era of growth in sustainable domestic hydropower over the next half century.” Nearly a year later, DOE Secretary Dr. Ernest Moniz discussed the importance of hydropower in a speech to the National Hydropower Association, stating that, “We have to pick up the covers off of this hidden renewable that’s right in front of our eyes and continues to have significant potential.” However reassuring the Administration’s rhetoric may have been, its actions show a starkly different agenda on this issue.

On October 18, 2016, Department of the Interior Secretary Sally Jewell sent a letter to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) urging the agency to approve the destruction of four dams on the Klamath River in California and Oregon. Sadly, this is not a new position for this administration. In 2009, during the first year of the Obama presidency, the administration ordered the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) to conduct studies on the possibility of removing four hydroelectric dams on the Snake River in the State of Washington, which it argued was necessary to “save” salmon populations in the Pacific Northwest. While we share the goal of protecting salmon populations, which are a vital to the economies of many communities that rely on fishing and outdoor recreation, the fact remains that hydropower dams are not adversely impacting endangered fish populations, as billions of dollars in investments by utilities has led to fish-passage success rates near 99%.

In recent years, extremist environmental groups have increased efforts to dismantle and remove federal dams and the Obama administration has often been a willing and supportive partner. These efforts defy commonsense, particularly at a time of major water challenges across the West and with an increasing need for clean, reliable hydropower. Electricity generated from U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and Bureau of Reclamation operated dams is utilized by millions of Americans every day and represents the largest source of renewable energy in the country. Many of these dams are essential components for flood control, strategic water storage, and life-sustaining irrigation for millions of acres of American agriculture. Tens of millions of Americans rely on these dams to supply their drinking water and support their livelihoods. The vital water, energy, economic, and ecological benefits provided by federally-owned and operated dams must be protected.

We believe that it is imperative that language ensuring the continued operation of federal hydroelectric dams remains a top priority as the House of Representatives considers legislation funding the federal government for the remainder of FY2017. We thank you for your consideration of this request, and for your leadership on the committee.

Sincerely,



Dan Newhouse  
Member of Congress



Paul A. Gosar, D.D.S.  
Member of Congress



Rob Bishop  
Member of Congress



Cynthia M. Lummis  
Member of Congress



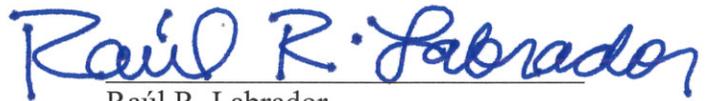
John Fleming  
Member of Congress



Tom McClintock  
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Trent Franks  
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Raúl R. Labrador  
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Glenn Grothman  
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