

OUTDOOR ALLIANCE

November 6, 2017

Honorable Paul Ryan
Speaker, House of Representatives
H-232 The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Minority Leader, House of Representatives
233 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

RE: H.R. 3043, Hydropower Policy Modernization Act

Dear Speaker Ryan and Minority Leader Pelosi,

We are writing to ask you to oppose H.R. 3043, the Hydropower Policy Modernization Act. If enacted, this bill would have significant negative impacts on outdoor recreation and its associated local economic benefits and would remove opportunities for meaningful local public involvement in hydropower licensing.

Outdoor Alliance is a coalition of nine member-based organizations representing the human powered outdoor recreation community. The coalition includes Access Fund, American Canoe Association, American Whitewater, International Mountain Bicycling Association, Winter Wildlands Alliance, The Mountaineers, the American Alpine Club, the Mazamas, and Colorado Mountain Club and represents the interests of the millions of Americans who climb, paddle, mountain bike, and backcountry ski and snowshoe on our nation's public lands, waters, and snowscapes.

Our members directly participate in licensing processes for hydropower projects in partnership with state and federal resource agencies. The authorities granted to federal agencies under the Federal Power Act, Clean Water Act, and Endangered Species Act have helped ensure that hydropower operations balance our society's need for power with the benefits of flowing rivers. These benefits include important economic contributions generated through the outdoor recreation economy, and outdoor recreation may be one benefit of hydropower under certain circumstances.

Outdoor recreation powers a vast economic engine valued at \$887 billion annually with much of this activity focused around water-based recreation, including rivers affected by hydropower operations. The National Hydropower Association's own website, which promotes the benefits of hydropower, states that "Swimming, boating, fishing, camping,



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skiing and hiking are just some of the recreational activities that take place year-round and across the country at sites developed and supported by the hydropower industry.”

We are concerned that H.R. 3043 will severely limit the ability of local communities to advocate for recreational benefits in hydropower licensing. If passed, H.R. 3043 will shift responsibilities away from states, federal land managers with locally-based recreation staff, and affected communities, and instead place exclusive authority within the hands of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC). FERC is a regulatory agency with no local field staff, frequently with only the ability to participate in one or two site visits in all. As a result, FERC staff are unlikely to have experience and familiarity with local resources and values. The end result of H.R. 3043 would be outcomes that are detrimental to outdoor recreation and local communities.

While hydropower provides certain benefits, it also always comes with significant impacts. This legislation would upset an important balance and the cooperative approach to hydropower licensing that effectively ensures that the interests of local communities and their interests in outdoor recreation are represented. Outdoor Alliance finds the hydropower provisions of H.R. 3043 to be deeply problematic, and we oppose any effort to diminish the ability of citizens and public resource agencies to ensure that hydropower licenses include provisions to protect the public river resources that are important to them.

Best regards,



Louis Geltman
Policy Director
Outdoor Alliance

cc: Adam Cramer, Executive Director, Outdoor Alliance
Brady Robinson, Executive Director, Access Fund
Wade Blackwood, Executive Director, American Canoe Association
Mark Singleton, Executive Director, American Whitewater
Dave Wiens, Executive Director, International Mountain Bicycling Association
Mark Menlove, Executive Director, Winter Wildlands Alliance
Tom Vogl, Chief Executive Officer, The Mountaineers
Phil Powers, Executive Director, American Alpine Club
Lee Davis, Executive Director, the Mazamas
Scott Robson, Executive Director, Colorado Mountain Club

