

**Dear Speaker Ryan, Minority Leader Pelosi, and Members of the House of Representatives:**

On behalf of more than 150,000 members nation-wide, Trout Unlimited offers the following statement in opposition to the hydropower provisions included in H.R. 8, the North American Energy Security and Infrastructure Act, approved by the House Energy and Commerce Committee on October 1, 2015.

Trout Unlimited is particularly opposed to language in HR 8 that would modify the process for relicensing hydropower projects. These changes would undercut protections designed to balance energy production with the protection and restoration of fish and wildlife, recreation and other community resources across our nation's waterways.

Trout Unlimited has been involved with trying to effectively balance hydropower with the needs of fisheries resources since its inception in 1959. Hydropower has an important place in the nation's energy grid. But hydropower must not destroy our rivers and fisheries, as it has too often in the past. Hydropower can, and should, be managed in a way that balances power and natural resource needs. Developers do not need and should not be allowed to skirt natural resource protections just to make licensing more expedient. Our members expect more from the modern hydropower industry. A careful balance between development and conservation must be reached. The hydro provisions of H.R. 8 fail to meet the critical test of "balance," and unnecessarily trade natural resource values for power production expediency. Provisions of HR 8 would:

- Limit natural resource impact review and oversight by state and federal resource agencies and tribes;
- Create new layers of bureaucracy and obstacles for resource agencies and tribes seeking studies or new information, which are essential elements of well-balanced relicensing processes;
- Set strict timelines with little or no deference to the permitting and review processes of states, federal resource agencies or tribal entities and waive jurisdiction for agencies that cannot comply;
- Failure to comply with the deadline or failure to receive a court approved extension, would result in a waiver of the agency approval in question. This process for resource agencies and tribes to seek a scheduling variance is unreasonably onerous, time-consuming, costly, and overly-complicated.

Very simply put, the Federal Power Act contains some of the most important fish and wildlife conserving authority in all of federal law. The hydropower permit and licensing process is critically important to determining how our nations' waterways will be impacted by energy development. Sportsmen and women across the country – along with businesses and communities who rely on healthy watersheds - care deeply about these issues.

The hydro text in H.R.8 proposes a one-sided process "solution" to a problem that has yet to be

clearly identified and sacrifices fish and river resources in the interest of expediency.

The House should reject this language and instead ask the committee to refocus its efforts on working with stakeholders to more broadly evaluate the needs and opportunities for improvements to existing permitting processes and to develop a more rational, collaborative approach to future hydropower legislation.

Sincerely,

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