



# FEDERAL ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION

**April 15, 2010**

**Item No. A-5**

**Chairman Jon Wellinghoff**

## **Statement of Chairman Jon Wellinghoff on Small/Low-Impact Hydro Development**

"This has been an extremely important endeavor and one that I have been particularly interested in. To address the U.S.'s energy challenges, we must ensure that we are both making the most efficient use of our existing hydropower resources and promoting smart investment in new hydropower resources and innovative technologies. There are great potential benefits from smart investment in small hydropower projects, and I am pleased that there has been an increased interest in small hydropower projects. The development of such distributed resources would not only provide new capacity, but also enhance reliability.

We should encourage small hydro by processing these projects expeditiously, while ensuring that we consider any environmental issues and the needs of the other stakeholders that may have interests. While I believe that small hydropower projects have an important role to play in this country's energy future, it is important to recognize that a project's small size may not mean that it has few environmental impacts.

Staff has done excellent work in engaging all interested stakeholders on issues related to licensing small non-federal hydropower projects in the United States, and we have received significant interest in this issue. I am pleased to support the action plan on small hydro. It appropriately balances the need to reduce the burden on developers of small hydropower projects with the need to protect the environment. Our staff has already been providing information to small hydropower developers, and is properly continuing programs such as the small hydro hotline and email address to assist applicants. In addition, I am pleased that staff will reach out and provide education to small hydro developers. Commission staff's experience will be invaluable in helping these developers prepare their applications. I also believe that by adding tools to the website, potential developers will better understand the licensing process and be able to choose the most effective and appropriate course to getting their small hydro project built, while ensuring environmental issues are appropriately considered. The action plan will help break down regulatory barriers facing small hydropower projects and ensure that we are developing hydropower resources in an efficient manner."