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December 5, 2011

The Honorable Cathy McMorris Rodgers
U.S. House of Representatives
2421 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative McMorris Rodgers:

On behalf of the Washington Public Utility Districts Association (WPUDA), I would like to express our appreciation for your leadership in advancing federal policies to encourage environmentally sound hydropower development. We appreciate the time you spent speaking to us at our board meeting. In particular, I write to support the bill you are preparing to introduce, the "*Hydropower Regulatory Relief Act of 2011*," as a positive step forward to promote small hydroelectric and conduit power projects.

WPUDA represents 27 nonprofit, community-owned utilities that provide electricity, water and wastewater services, and wholesale telecommunications to more than 1.7 million people in Washington.

This bill would amend the Federal Power Act to allow the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) to exempt from licensing requirements small hydropower projects up to 10 MW on existing dams. In addition, it would automatically exempt conduit hydro projects up to 5 MW from FERC licensing and give FERC discretion to exempt conduit projects up to 40 MW. It would also direct FERC to investigate the feasibility of an expedited two-year licensing process for hydro installations at closed-loop pump storage projects and non-powered dams, and to develop pilot projects to test that approach. Further, it would allow FERC to extend preliminary permits for not more than two years if they find the permittee has carried out activities under the permit in good faith and with reasonable diligence.

WPUDA strongly believes that investing in our existing hydropower infrastructure will strengthen our economy, reduce pollution, and help us move toward energy independence. As you well know, hydropower is the backbone of Washington's economy, providing three quarters of our electricity, and keeping rates among the lowest in the country. Your bill will help increase our nation's hydropower capacity, and promote cost-effective domestic sources of energy in an environmentally sound way.

Again, we thank you for your leadership and look forward to working with you to advance the "*Hydropower Regulatory Relief Act of 2011*."

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "George M. Caan".

George M. Caan
Executive Director