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News Release

Interior Report Reveals Potential to Generate Significant Clean Electricity and Create Jobs at Existing Dam Facilities

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WASHINGTON, DC – The Department of the Interior today released the results of an internal study that shows the department could generate up to one million megawatt hours of electricity annually and create jobs by adding hydropower capacity at 70 of its existing facilities.

The report, *Hydropower Resource Assessment at Existing Reclamation Facilities*, estimates that the additional hydropower capabilities could create enough clean, renewable energy to annually power more than 85,000 households. Based on industry estimates for job potential associated with the kind of hydropower additions identified in this report, approximately 1,200 jobs could be created, including jobs in administration, manufacturing, construction, engineering, operations and maintenance.

"Adding hydropower capability at existing Reclamation facilities is a cost-effective and environmentally sustainable way to build our clean energy economy," said Assistant Secretary for Water and Science Anne Castle. "We can increase our renewable hydropower output without building new dams. This report highlights the exciting potential for substantial hydropower development and related jobs at existing facilities throughout the western United States."

The Bureau of Reclamation developed the report as part of President Obama's initiative to develop a comprehensive renewable energy portfolio and to meet 80 percent of our energy needs with clean sources by 2035.

"Our report reflects Reclamation's commitment to advancing renewable energy in a manner that promotes efficiency and sustainability through the use of existing resources," said Reclamation Commissioner Mike Connor.

The report studied 530 sites throughout Reclamation's jurisdiction—including dams, diversion structures, and some canals and tunnels. Of those sites, the assessment made a preliminary identification of 70 facilities with the most potential to add hydropower. These 70 facilities are located in 14 states.

Colorado, Utah, Montana, Texas and Arizona have the most hydropower potential. Facilities with additional hydropower potential are also found in California, Idaho, Nebraska, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, South Dakota, Washington and Wyoming.

The chart at www.usbr.gov/power shows a state-by-state breakdown of the 70 sites with the greatest potential to develop additional hydropower and contribute clean energy to the grid. It indicates potential installed capacity, annual production and a benefit-cost ratio that incorporates incentives for developing clean renewable energy available from existing federal and state programs.

Reclamation Commissioner Connor explained how the report can best be used. "Although this report is not a feasibility analysis, it provides information that allows Interior and developers to prioritize investments in a more detailed analysis that focuses on sites demonstrating reasonable potential for being economically, financially and environmentally viable," he noted.

Connor pointed out that for many of these sites, hydropower development would be conducted under a "Lease of Power Privilege Agreement" through which a non-federal entity is given a contractual right for up to 40 years to use a Reclamation facility for electric power generation

Reclamation will be publishing two Federal Register notices in the near future regarding Lease of Power Privilege opportunities at Granby and Pueblo dams in Colorado. These dams were identified in the report as having high potential for hydropower development.

A related, important product that Reclamation is making publicly available is the Hydropower Assessment Tool that was used in the report to analyze the 530 sites. The tool can be applied to any potential hydropower site and requires simple inputs of daily flows, head water elevations and tail water elevation. The results provide valuable information on potential hydropower production and economic viability.

The report released today dovetails the 2010 Federal Memorandum of Understanding for Hydropower between the U.S. Department of the Interior, U.S. Department of Energy, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. This Memorandum of Understanding was established to help meet the nation's needs for reliable, affordable, and environmentally sustainable hydropower by building a long-term working relationship, establishing goals and priorities, and aligning ongoing and future renewable energy development efforts.

The Bureau of Reclamation is the largest wholesale water supplier and the second largest producer of hydroelectric power in the United States, with operations and facilities in the 17 Western States. Its 58 power plants annually produce, on average, 40 billion kilowatt-hours per year, enough to meet the needs of 9 million people.

The report and Hydropower Assessment Tool are available on Reclamation's website at www.usbr.gov/power. A recording of today's teleconference will be available on the site later in the day.

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