

Electricity Exports: Promote Canadian Hydroelectricity as a Renewable Energy Source to American Legislators

Hydroelectricity is a clean, renewable, reliable and competitive energy source.

Hydroelectricity produces no air pollution, waste or polluting or toxic by-products. It also generates very few greenhouse-gas (GHG) emissions.

Hydroelectric reservoirs can store energy and absorb any fluctuations associated with intermittent renewable forms of energy, such as wind and solar energy, whose use is increasing. Hydroelectricity helps ensure the future of renewable energies.

At the International Conference for Renewable Energies held in Bonn in 2004, 154 countries recognized hydroelectricity as a renewable energy source.

More recently, in September 2009, New England governments and Eastern Canadian Premiers approved a resolution recognizing hydroelectricity as a renewable energy source and recommended that it be recognized as such in Canadian and American federal legislation.

Finally, the State of Vermont has passed a law recognizing that all forms of hydroelectricity are renewable energy sources.

In the United States, several states adopted RPS (*Renewal Portfolio Standard*) programs recognizing hydroelectricity as a renewable energy source. Certain federal projects proposed by the US Congress under the RES program (*Renewable Electricity Standard*) also recognize this.

Since hydroelectricity is the most important basic renewable energy source available in North America, hydroelectric installations of all sizes that avoid or minimize environmental and social impacts should be treated the same way as other clean energy sources (natural gas, nuclear or carbon storage) in American federal statutes.

This would benefit both countries. On the one hand, hydroelectricity accounts for 60% of electricity generation in Canada and can be a substitute for fossil energies produced in several American states. On the other hand, for Canada's main producing provinces (Quebec, Newfoundland & Labrador, Ontario, British Columbia and Manitoba), the prospect of exporting more hydroelectricity south of the border in the next few years is a sizable business opportunity.

The recognition of Canadian hydroelectricity as "renewable energy" by Congress and American state legislators is an important step towards increasing our electricity exports to the US and reducing North American GHG emissions.

Recommendations

That Canada's federal, provincial and territorial governments multiply representations to American legislators to have hydroelectricity recognized as a renewable energy source in states RPS programs and US federal RES programs.