



## HYDROPOWER LICENSING TRANSPARENCY ACT (S. 3500)

### DATE INTRODUCED:

12/16/2025

### WHAT:

S. 3500, the Hydropower Licensing Transparency Act would create accountability in the licensing process for hydropower projects. The bipartisan bill would amend the [Federal Power Act](#) to require the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) to submit an annual report to Congress on the status of all pending hydropower license applications.

The report must include the key details for both original and relicensing applications, including:

- The date of the notice of intent to apply and any assigned case numbers or dockets;
- The current status of the project;
- An estimated time and schedule for future proceedings; and
- A description of required actions and progress made by all involved parties, including FERC.

### WHY IT MATTERS:

Hydropower accounts for 5.7% of [U.S. energy generation](#), but dams are at risk of retiring from power production due to ongoing maintenance and operational costs. In addition, hydropower requires federally approved licensing conducted by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC). Licensing proceedings can take multiple years to complete and require significant financial resources from the project sponsor to undertake. This bill would help reduce uncertainty for licensing applications by providing annual reporting to Congress on the status of efforts to streamline the process.

### WHAT'S NEXT:

This bipartisan legislation would advance permitting reform where it matters most: increasing transparency for Congress as it attempts to lower barriers for low-impact projects to provide continued power to the grid while preserving strong environmental oversight.

### ORIGINAL SPONSOR:

Sen. Catherine Cortez Masto (D-NV)

**CO-SPONSORS:**

Sen. Steve Daines (R-MT)

**SUPPORT:**

ClearPath Action

**CONGRESS.GOV LINK:**

[S. 3500](#)