



WATER POWER RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT
REAUTHORIZATION ACT
(S. 3684/H.R.7129)

DATE INTRODUCED:

1/15/2026

WHAT:

S. 3684, the Water Power Research and Development Reauthorization Act, and its House companion, [H.R. 7129](#), are bipartisan bills that would reauthorize hydropower R&D activities at the Department of Energy (DOE) through fiscal year 2030. This includes demonstration programs for innovative technologies supporting marine energy, pumped storage and hydropower.

The bill would also add several authorities for DOE to prioritize hydropower innovation to help meet rising energy demand, including research on hydropower integration with microgrids and data centers.

WHY IT MATTERS:

The DOE's Water Power Technologies Office (WPTO) was originally authorized in the [Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007](#). Significant amendments were included in the Energy Act of 2020, which expired at the end of last year.

Reauthorizing The [Energy Act of 2020](#) ensures the U.S. remains at the forefront of energy innovation. This reauthorization for hydropower activities provides needed direction and additional funding authorization for the Department for the next five years.

Hydropower was the nation's first source of renewable energy and provides one of the largest sources of dispatchable renewable electricity. [Hydropower](#) accounts for 5.7% of U.S. energy generation. Conventional hydropower, paired with emerging hydrokinetic technologies, represents an emerging opportunity to expand domestic firm power. Yet, outdated permitting frameworks create unnecessary costs and delays for projects with minimal environmental impact.

By investing in hydropower and marine energy R&D, the bill would:

- **Unlock additional reliable, clean, firm power** from emerging marine energy technologies;

- **Improve grid reliability** as electricity demand grows from advanced manufacturing, AI, data centers and electrification; and
- **Support innovation** by accelerating the deployment of next-generation marine energy and hydrokinetic technologies.

WHAT'S NEXT:

If enacted, the Water Power Research and Development Reauthorization Act would modernize hydropower and marine energy R&D.

ORIGINAL SPONSOR:

S.3684

Sen. Lisa Murkowski (R-AK)

H.R.7129

Rep. Suzanne Bonamici (D-OR)

CO-SPONSORS:

S.3684

Sen. Ron Wyden (D-OR)

H.R.7129

Rep. Nick Begich (R-AK)

SUPPORT:

ClearPath Action, National Hydropower Association, Alaska Power Association

CONGRESS.GOV LINK:

[S.3684](#)

[H.R.7129](#)