

U.S. House of Representatives, Committee on Energy and Commerce,
Subcommittee on Energy, Climate, and Grid Security

September 20, 2023 Hearing

“American Hydropower: Unleashing Reliable, Renewable, Clean Power Across the U.S.”

Questions for the Record

Responded to by Terry Turpin, Director, Office of Energy Projects,
Federal Energy Regulatory Commission

The Honorable Russ Fulcher

1. I want to focus on grid reliability. FERC Commissioner Mark Christie has said traditional sources of power are shutting down “at an unsafe pace” to keep up with the transition to wind and solar. He goes on to say, “the red lights are flashing everywhere. We’re not going to have sufficient power supply.” Hydropower is 51% of Idaho’s in-state electricity, there is bipartisan support for hydro, along with geothermal and nuclear power. All these sources, unlike solar and wind, are baseload reliable. While these are available in Idaho and can be more heavily utilized, I do worry about the EPA’s push to move away from the use of coal, natural gas – including in Idaho – and other traditional sources too quickly, putting our fellow Americans in jeopardy for their power.
 - a. What is your message to those worried about rising demand in the face of less electricity reliability for our grid system?

Response: My expertise at the Commission involves the review of environmental impacts from construction and operation of hydropower facilities and natural gas projects but does not extend to the Bulk Power System. Regarding this matter, my understanding is that policy issues related to electric grid reliability, including implications of EPA’s proposed rule, were discussed during the annual Commissioner-led Reliability Technical Conference held Thursday, November 9, 2023. The Commission issued a request for post-technical conference comments regarding how the rule, if implemented as proposed, might affect electric reliability. As Chairman Phillips has stated, electric reliability is one of his highest priorities at FERC, including ensuring that all methods of power production enhance, not weaken, the electric grid.