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Rhode Island renewables legislation advances

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development, use of hydropower

PAWTUCKET, R.I.

10/15/2014



Rhode Island Gov. Lincoln Chafee has signed renewable energy legislation that includes provisions to advance regional development and use of hydropower.

During a signing ceremony Oct. 3 at Rhode Island's historic Slater Mill in Pawtucket, Chafee signed: the Affordable Clean Energy Security Act allowing the state to participate in regional efforts to address energy reliability and price volatility by pursuing cost-effective energy infrastructure projects; the Renewable Energy Growth Program expanding the state's Distributed Generation Contracts Program to 200 MW of capacity for in-state renewable energy systems; and the Renewable Energy Professional Certificate law updating electrical and plumber licensing laws to clarify their work on renewable energy projects.

Among other provisions, the legislation prepares Rhode Island for opportunities for affordable hydropower, officials said.

"Collectively, they will create jobs, remove barriers facing small businesses, grow the economy, reduce greenhouse gas emissions and bring energy security to Rhode Islanders," the governor said.



The Affordable Clean Energy Security Act authorizes the Rhode Island Office of Energy Resources and other state agencies to participate in solicitations for development of regional electric transmission projects in New England that would allow transmission of large or small, domestic or [international hydroelectric power](#) that will benefit Rhode Island ratepayers.

ACES also would authorize public electric distribution utilities to participate in regional efforts to procure large or small, domestic or international hydroelectric power that will benefit Rhode Island ratepayers, provided that large-scale hydropower would not be eligible for benefits under the state's renewable energy standards law. With regulatory approval, the utilities also may solicit competitive proposals for long-term contracts with renewable energy developers including proposals for large or small, domestic or international hydroelectric power.

The Renewable Energy Growth Program is designed to finance for five years the development, construction and operation of renewable-energy distributed generation projects of no more than 5 MW within a distribution utility's load zone.

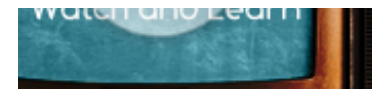
The REG legislation would exempt hydropower projects from the requirement that eligible renewable energy projects must be new and not under construction. Such hydro projects would be eligible if they are existing but require a material investment to restore or maintain reliable and efficient operation and meet all regulatory, environmental or operational requirements.

Each year, the distribution utility is to file tariffs with state regulators that are designed to provide a multi-year stream of performance-based incentives to eligible renewable energy projects including hydropower.

"Rhode Island continues to lead the way on clean energy," said [Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse](#), D-R.I., who participated in the signing ceremony. "These bills will remove barriers to investing in renewables, while ensuring that Rhode Islanders have access to affordable and reliable energy."

The Rhode Island Economic Development Corp. last year approved a \$200,000 grant for JAL Hydro LLC to study development of a 296-kW run-of-river hydropower project utilizing two Archimedes screw turbine-generators at [Natick Pond Dam](#) (No. 14505) on the Pawtuxet River in West Warwick, R.I.

Rhode Island announced plans in 2006 to use hydropower to increase the overall amount of renewable energy that is produced in the state to 20 percent. Although Rhode Island is the smallest



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U.S. state, it has [more than 650 dams](#). The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission issued a (maximum) 5-MW exemption from hydropower licensing in 2011 to Slatersville Hydro LLC for the [360-kW Slatersville project](#) (No. 13356) on Rhode Island's Upper Slatersville Reservoir.

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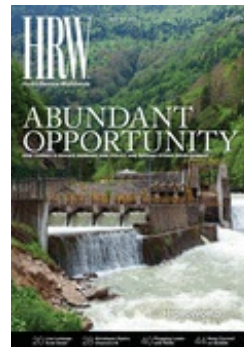
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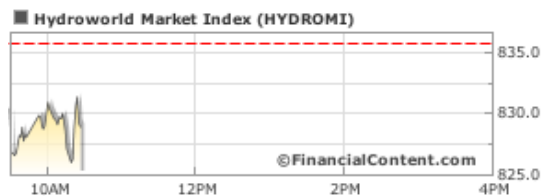
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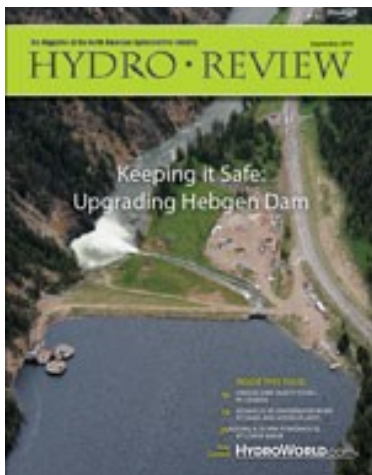
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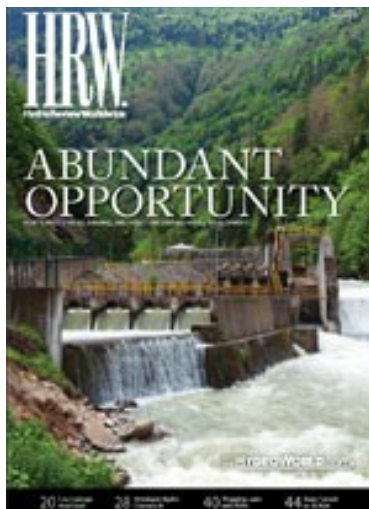
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