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Innovations, Opportunities for Hydropower to Cut Carbon Emissions and Meet Renewable Energy Needs to Be Addressed at International Conference in Sacramento: HydroVision 2008

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SACRAMENTO, Calif., July 14, 2008 /PRNewswire via COMTEX/ -- Opportunities to capitalize on innovations allowing greater and more efficient use of hydropower -- the largest source of renewable energy in the world -- will be a key focus of HydroVision 2008, an international conference beginning today in Sacramento, Calif.

"Hydropower is going to play a key role in adapting to climate change," said Lester Snow, director of the California Department of Water Resources.

"Governor Schwarzenegger has put California out front in shifting to clean power and reducing greenhouse gases and I believe hydropower is going to help keep us in the lead. Our State Water Project, for example, not only generates clean hydropower to pump water to our people, farms and industry, but provides flexibility to our grid."

"This is a time of tremendous development activity throughout the world, with more than 1,000 international hydro projects under construction, and projects totaling 238,000 megawatts being actively pursued," added Leslie Eden, president of HCI Publications, the conference's organizer. "With the need for additional electric capacity and the growing emphasis on climate-friendly generation, hydropower continues to emerge as a key reliable, affordable, clean energy resource."

HydroVision 2008 is bringing together more than 2,300 attendees to share new approaches, learn about new technologies and find solutions to common issues. This year's conference is addressing a wide range of operational and policy topics, including new innovations like ocean, tidal and stream power that could support a significant shift to renewable electricity. Some of the specific subjects under discussion include:

-- How government agencies and residents in project areas can balance the need to meet regulatory and environmental requirements with the desire to get more water-based renewable resources online in a timely manner.

-- How hydropower reservoir storage can potentially help with water storage between seasons, given the impact of climate change on the availability of water resources (such as snowpack in California).

-- How hydroelectricity can effectively work in tandem with intermittent renewables like wind and solar power, especially in light of California's requirement that investor-owned utilities obtain 20% of their retail power sales from renewable sources by 2010.

Dr. David Victor, professor of law and director of the Energy and Sustainable Development Program at Stanford University, will provide a keynote speech on July 16 that will address how hydropower can work with other renewable power sources to achieve a cleaner electricity mix. He also will identify both the challenges and risks facing hydropower in relation to climate change policy and discuss its significant potential for cutting emissions of greenhouse gases.

"This conference comes at a time when governments around the world are struggling to tackle the emissions that cause global warming. Hydropower, if applied well, is a ready technology for the cause," Dr. Victor said.



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He added, "Other renewable power sources -- such as wind and solar -- can play a role in dealing with global warming, but they suffer the problem that they are intermittent. Hydro, by contrast, is relatively easy to ramp up when needed, which means that not only is it an important renewable source of electricity on its own, but it also can work well in tandem with other renewable power resources. With a lot of hydro power available, a country could make a massive shift to renewable electricity."

According to the International Hydropower Association, hydropower -- which harnesses the natural energy of flowing and falling water to run turbines and generate electricity -- currently offsets 2.1 billion tons of carbon dioxide emissions annually.

In addition to being a non-petroleum-based resource that can enhance energy security, hydropower operates reliably and flexibly, with the ability to change output quickly to meet varying electrical demands. This ability to handle changing loads, combined with hydropower's voltage control capabilities, serves an important role in maintaining electric grid stability.

Hydropower also provides many non-power benefits in areas such as irrigation, water supply, flood control, water recreation and more.

To learn more about HydroVision 2008, visit <http://www.hcipub.com/hydrovision/>.

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