"The Importance of Pennsylvania Waterways to Energy and Economic Development"

Pre-filed testimony of Justin Trudell, COO of FirstLight Power

Good morning esteemed Senators and guests. My name is Justin Trudell and I'm the Chief Operating Officer of FirstLight Power and a Board member at the National Hydropower Association. I'm excited to be here today to talk to you about the benefits of hydropower to Pennsylvania's energy and economic development outlook.

The National Hydropower Association is a nonprofit national association dedicated exclusively to preserving and expanding clean, renewable, affordable hydropower and marine energy. Firstlight power is a leading clean power producer and energy storage company in New England and Pennsylvania with a portfolio that includes nearly 1.4 GW of pumped-hydro storage, battery storage, hydroelectric generation, and solar generation—one of the largest clean energy generators in the northeast.

In Pennsylvania specifically, we operate 2 run of river hydropower stations located at Allegheny Lock and Dams number 8 and 9 totaling 31.5 MWs producing around 200,000 megawatt hours per year. That's enough electricity to power roughly 28,000 homes with clean, renewable energy.

FirstLight's mission and vision is to accelerate the decarbonization of the electric grid by developing, owning, operating and integrating large-scale renewable energy and storage assets to meet the world's growing clean energy needs and to deliver an electric system that is clean, reliable, affordable and equitable.

Building upon our industry-leading experience in operating large-scale renewable energy and storage assets, FirstLight's vision and commitment to leading the energy industry transformation makes us uniquely positioned to navigate rapidly evolving market conditions and grow our portfolio in North American markets in the years ahead.

FirstLight is advancing strategic growth opportunities through both organic project development and project acquisitions. We are actively developing a pipeline of more than 1GW of solar and wind along with 500 MWh of energy storage capacity across states in ISO-New England, PJM, and New York ISO. One of the key initiatives we are pursuing is pairing solar and storage assets with our existing hydro stations to be able to offer a 24-7 clean power package. Many times, our hydropower stations exited deregulation with excess land and ready access to transmission that can be used for this type of development.

FirstLight employs over 140 people, with a mix union and non-union members. Because typical hydropower sites are usually located in rural parts of the states we operate in, we generally offer above average salaries and benefits to our employees. Here in Pennsylvania, we currently have five full time employees who work and live about an hour north of Pittsburgh. Our annual salary, bonus, and benefits budget is close to half a million dollars per year. Hydropower is also a great landing spot for employees leaving shuttering fossil fueled plants as we continue to focus on the clean energy future. Approximately 25 percent of FirstLight operations employees have previously worked in the fossil industry. These are just the direct labor benefits our hydropower operations bring to the state.

Additionally, FirstLight spends millions of dollars each year to safely operate and maintain the facilities, purchase insurance, and pay local and state property taxes. Depending on the location and what other industries are present, local hydropower stations can provide a significant portion of the operating budget for local towns. The majority of our operating expenses flow directly to the local economies around the stations where we hire local contractors, order consumables from local stores, and fabricate parts in local machine shops.

Our hydro stations, dams, and electric transmission assets also require periodic major maintenance and refurbishment projects. Much of the project support and execution comes from the

local economies. At our two small Pennsylvania plants, we spend roughly half a million dollars per year for these types of projects.

I would be remiss if I didn't also tout the environmental and recreational benefits of hydropower. In exchange for using the public good that is natural river flows as fuel, hydro stations often enhance the natural environment through managing oxygen levels, water temperature, and flood control. At many of our stations, fish passage routes are installed to help migratory fish and resident species navigate the river. Recreational enhancements like walking trails, viewing platforms, and paddle sport access bring even more people to our sites and can provide additional economic benefits to the local communities.

Taken as a whole, hydropower sites have an outsized impact on the economies surrounding them and Pennsylvania. According to National Hydropower Association data, there are already 26 powered dams in the state and two pumped storage projects. In addition, there are 45 non-powered dams which might be suitable for future expansion. Pennsylvania has a fantastic opportunity to continue to encourage hydropower development in the state and read the rewards of this incredible resource.