

16 USC 797: General powers of Commission

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From Title 16-CONSERVATION

CHAPTER 12-FEDERAL REGULATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF POWER

SUBCHAPTER I-REGULATION OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF WATER POWER AND RESOURCES

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§797. General powers of Commission

The Commission is authorized and empowered-

(a) Investigations and data

To make investigations and to collect and record data concerning the utilization of the water resources of any region to be developed, the water-power industry and its relation to other industries and to interstate or foreign commerce, and concerning the location, capacity, development costs, and relation to markets of power sites, and whether the power from Government dams can be advantageously used by the United States for its public purposes, and what is a fair value of such power, to the extent the Commission may deem necessary or useful for the purposes of this chapter.

(b) Statements as to investment of licenses in projects; access to projects, maps, etc.

To determine the actual legitimate original cost of and the net investment in a licensed project, and to aid the Commission in such determinations, each licensee shall, upon oath, within a reasonable period of time to be fixed by the Commission, after the construction of the original project or any addition thereto or betterment thereof, file with the Commission in such detail as the Commission may require, a statement in duplicate showing the actual legitimate original cost of construction of such project addition, or betterment, and of the price paid for water rights, rights-of-way, lands, or interest in lands. The licensee shall grant to the Commission or to its duly authorized agent or agents, at all reasonable times, free access to such project, addition, or betterment, and to all maps, profiles, contracts, reports of engineers, accounts, books, records, and all other papers and documents relating thereto. The statement of actual legitimate original cost of said project, and revisions thereof as determined by the Commission, shall be filed with the Secretary of the Treasury.

(c) Cooperation with executive departments; information and aid furnished Commission

To cooperate with the executive departments and other agencies of State or National Governments in such investigations; and for such purpose the several departments and agencies of the National Government are authorized and directed upon the request of the Commission, to furnish such records, papers, and information in their possession as may be requested by the Commission, and temporarily to detail to the Commission such officers or experts as may be necessary in such investigations.

(d) Publication of information, etc.; reports to Congress

To make public from time to time the information secured hereunder, and to provide for the publication of its reports and investigations in such form and manner as may be best adapted for public information and use. The Commission, on or before the 3d day of January of each year, shall submit to Congress for the fiscal year preceding a classified report showing the permits and licenses issued under this subchapter, and in each case the parties thereto, the terms prescribed, and the moneys received if any, or account thereof.

(e) Issue of licenses for construction, etc., of dams, conduits, reservoirs, etc.

To issue licenses to citizens of the United States, or to any association of such citizens, or to any corporation organized under the laws of the United States or any State thereof, or to any State or municipality for the purpose of constructing, operating, and maintaining dams, water conduits, reservoirs, power houses, transmission lines, or other project works necessary or convenient for the development and improvement of navigation and for the development, transmission, and utilization of power across, along, from, or in any of the streams or other bodies of water over which Congress has jurisdiction under its authority to regulate commerce with foreign nations and among the several States, or upon any part of the public lands and reservations of the United States (including the Territories), or for the purpose of utilizing the surplus water or water power from any Government dam, except as herein provided: *Provided*, That licenses shall be issued within any reservation only after a finding by the Commission that the license will not interfere or be inconsistent with the purpose for which such reservation was created or acquired, and shall be subject to and contain such conditions as the Secretary of the department under whose supervision such reservation falls shall deem

necessary for the adequate protection and utilization of such reservations: *Provided further*, That no license affecting the navigable capacity of any navigable waters of the United States shall be issued until the plans of the dam or other structures affecting the navigation have been approved by the Chief of Engineers and the Secretary of the Army. Whenever the contemplated improvement is, in the judgment of the Commission, desirable and justified in the public interest for the purpose of improving or developing a waterway or waterways for the use or benefit of interstate or foreign commerce, a finding to that effect shall be made by the Commission and shall become a part of the records of the Commission: *Provided further*, That in case the Commission shall find that any Government dam may be advantageously used by the United States for public purposes in addition to navigation, no license therefor shall be issued until two years after it shall have reported to Congress the facts and conditions relating thereto, except that this provision shall not apply to any Government dam constructed prior to June 10, 1920: *And provided further*, That upon the filing of any application for a license which has not been preceded by a preliminary permit under subsection (f) of this section, notice shall be given and published as required by the proviso of said subsection. In deciding whether to issue any license under this subchapter for any project, the Commission, in addition to the power and development purposes for which licenses are issued, shall give equal consideration to the purposes of energy conservation, the protection, mitigation of damage to, and enhancement of, fish and wildlife (including related spawning grounds and habitat), the protection of recreational opportunities, and the preservation of other aspects of environmental quality.

(f) Preliminary permits; notice of application

To issue preliminary permits for the purpose of enabling applicants for a license hereunder to secure the data and to perform the acts required by section 802 of this title: *Provided, however*, That upon the filing of any application for a preliminary permit by any person, association, or corporation the Commission, before granting such application, shall at once give notice of such application in writing to any State or municipality likely to be interested in or affected by such application; and shall also publish notice of such application once each week for four weeks in a daily or weekly newspaper published in the county or counties in which the project or any part hereof or the lands affected thereby are situated.

(g) Investigation of occupancy for developing power; orders

Upon its own motion to order an investigation of any occupancy of, or evidenced intention to occupy, for the purpose of developing electric power, public lands, reservations, or streams or other bodies of water over which Congress has jurisdiction under its authority to regulate commerce with foreign nations and among the several States by any person, corporation, State, or municipality and to issue such order as it may find appropriate, expedient, and in the public interest to conserve and utilize the navigation and water-power resources of the region.

(June 10, 1920, ch. 285, pt. I, §4, 41 Stat. 1065 ; June 23, 1930, ch. 572, §2, 46 Stat. 798 ; renumbered pt. I and amended, Aug. 26, 1935, ch. 687, title II, §§202, 212, 49 Stat. 839 , 847; July 26, 1947, ch. 343, title II, §205(a), 61 Stat. 501 ; Pub. L. 97-375, title II, §212, Dec. 21, 1982, 96 Stat. 1826 ; Pub. L. 99-495, §3(a), Oct. 16, 1986, 100 Stat. 1243 .)

AMENDMENTS

1986-Subsec. (e). Pub. L. 99-495 inserted provisions that in deciding whether to issue any license under this subchapter, the Commission, in addition to power and development purposes, is required to give equal consideration to purposes of energy conservation, the protection, mitigation of damage to, and enhancement of, fish and wildlife, the protection of recreational opportunities, and the preservation of environmental quality.

1982-Subsec. (d). Pub. L. 97-375 struck out provision that the report contain the names and show the compensation of the persons employed by the Commission.

1935-Subsec. (a). Act Aug. 26, 1935, §202, struck out last paragraph of subsec. (a) which related to statements of cost of construction, etc., and free access to projects, maps, etc., and is now covered by subsec. (b).

Subsecs. (b), (c). Act Aug. 26, 1935, §202, added subsec. (b) and redesignated former subsecs. (b) and (c) as (c) and (d), respectively.

Subsec. (d). Act Aug. 26, 1935, §202, redesignated subsec. (c) as (d) and substituted "3d day of January" for "first Monday in December" in second sentence. Former subsec. (d) redesignated (e).

Subsec. (e). Act Aug. 26, 1935, §202, redesignated subsec. (d) and (e) and substituted "streams or other bodies of water over which Congress has jurisdiction under its authority to regulate commerce with foreign nations and among the several States" for "navigable waters of the United States" and "subsection (f)" for "subsection (e)". Former subsec. (e) redesignated (f).

Subsec. (f). Act Aug. 26, 1935, §202, redesignated subsec. (e) as (f) and substituted "once each week for four weeks" for "for eight weeks". Former section (f), which related to the power of the Commission to prescribe regulations for the establishment of a system of accounts and the maintenance thereof, was struck out by act Aug. 26, 1935.

Subsec. (g). Act Aug. 26, 1935, §202, added subsec. (g). Former subsec. (g), which related to the power of the Commission to hold hearings and take testimony by deposition, was struck out.

Subsec. (h). Act Aug. 26, 1935, §202, struck out subsec. (h) which related to the power of the Commission to perform any and all acts necessary and proper for the purpose of carrying out the provisions of this chapter.

1930-Subsec. (d). Act June 23, 1930, inserted sentence respecting contents of report.

CHANGE OF NAME

Department of War designated Department of the Army and title of Secretary of War changed to Secretary of the Army by section 205(a) of act [July 26, 1947, ch. 343, title II](#), 61 Stat. 501 . Section 205(a) of act July 26, 1947, was repealed by section 53 of act [Aug. 10, 1956, ch. 1041](#), 70A Stat. 641 . Section 1 of act Aug. 10, 1956, enacted "Title 10, Armed Forces" which in sections 3010 to 3013 continued military Department of the Army under administrative supervision of Secretary of the Army.

EFFECTIVE DATE OF 1986 AMENDMENT

Section 18 of Pub. L. 99-495 provided that: "Except as otherwise provided in this Act, the amendments made by this Act [enacting section 823b of this title and amending this section and sections 800, 802, 803, 807, 808, 817, 823a, 824a-3, and 824j of this title] shall take effect with respect to each license, permit, or exemption issued under the Federal Power Act after the enactment of this Act [Oct. 16, 1986]. The amendments made by sections 6 and 12 of this Act [enacting section 823b of this title and amending section 817 of this title] shall apply to licenses, permits, and exemptions without regard to when issued."

SAVINGS PROVISION

Section 17(a) of Pub. L. 99-495 provided that: "Nothing in this Act [see Short Title of 1986 Amendment note set out under section 791a of this title] shall be construed as authorizing the appropriation of water by any Federal, State, or local agency, Indian tribe, or any other entity or individual. Nor shall any provision of this Act-

"(1) affect the rights or jurisdiction of the United States, the States, Indian tribes, or other entities over waters of any river or stream or over any ground water resource;

"(2) alter, amend, repeal, interpret, modify, or be in conflict with any interstate compact made by the States;

"(3) alter or establish the respective rights of States, the United States, Indian tribes, or any person with respect to any water or water-related right;

"(4) affect, expand, or create rights to use transmission facilities owned by the Federal Government;

"(5) alter, amend, repeal, interpret, modify, or be in conflict with, the Treaty rights or other rights of any Indian tribe;

"(6) permit the filing of any competing application in any relicensing proceeding where the time for filing a competing application expired before the enactment of this Act [Oct. 16, 1986]; or

"(7) modify, supersede, or affect the Pacific Northwest Electric Power Planning and Conservation Act [16 U.S.C. 839 et seq.]."

TRANSFER OF FUNCTIONS

Federal Power Commission terminated and its functions with regard to licenses and permits for dams, reservoirs, or other works for development and improvement of navigation and for development and utilization of power across, along, from, or in navigable waters under this subchapter transferred to Federal Energy Regulatory Commission by sections 7172(a)(1)(A) and 7293 of Title 42, The Public Health and Welfare.

Executive and administrative functions of Federal Power Commission, with certain reservations, transferred to Chairman of such Commission, with authority vested in him to authorize their performance by any officer, employee, or administrative unit under his jurisdiction, by Reorg. Plan No. 9 of 1950, §§1, 2, eff. May 24, 1950, 15 F.R. 3175, 64 Stat. 1265, set out as a note under section 792 of this title.

IMPROVEMENT AT EXISTING FEDERAL FACILITIES

Pub. L. 102-486, [title XXIV, §2404, Oct. 24, 1992](#), 106 Stat. 3097 , as amended by Pub. L. 103-437, [§6\(d\) \(37\), Nov. 2, 1994](#), 108 Stat. 4585 ; Pub. L. 104-66, [title I, §1052\(h\), Dec. 21, 1995](#), 109 Stat. 718 , provided that:

"(a) STUDIES OF OPPORTUNITIES FOR INCREASED HYDROELECTRIC GENERATION.-The Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of the Army, in consultation with the Secretary, shall perform reconnaissance level studies of cost effective opportunities to increase hydropower production at existing federally-owned or operated water regulation, storage, and conveyance facilities. Such studies shall be completed within 2 years after the date of enactment of this Act [Oct. 24, 1992] and transmitted to the Committee on Energy

and Natural Resources and the Committee on Environment and Public Works of the United States Senate and to the Committee on Energy and Commerce [now Committee on Commerce], the Committee on Natural Resources [now Committee on Resources], and the Committee on Public Works and Transportation [now Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure] of the United States House of Representatives. An individual study shall be prepared for each of the Nation's principal river basins. Each such study shall identify and describe with specificity the following matters:

"(1) opportunities to improve the efficiency of hydroelectric generation at such facilities through, but not limited to, mechanical, structural, or operational changes;

"(2) opportunities to improve the efficiency of the use of water supplied or regulated by Federal projects where such improvement could, in the absence of legal or administrative constraints, make additional water supplies available for hydroelectric generation or reduce project energy use;

"(3) opportunities to create additional generating capacity at existing facilities through, but not limited to, the construction of additional generating units, the uprating of generators and turbines, and the construction of pumped storage facilities; and

"(4) preliminary assessment of the costs and the economic and environmental consequences of such measures.

"(b) EXCEPTION FOR PREVIOUS STUDIES.-In those cases where studies of the type required by this section have been prepared by any agency of the United States and published within the ten years prior to the date of enactment of this Act [Oct. 24, 1992], the Secretary of the Interior, or the Secretary of the Army, may choose not to perform new studies but incorporate the information developed by such studies into the study reports required by this section.

"(c) AUTHORIZATION.-There is authorized to be appropriated in each of the fiscal years 1993, 1994, and 1995 such sums as may be necessary to carry out the purposes of this section."

WATER CONSERVATION AND ENERGY PRODUCTION

Pub. L. 102-486, title XXIV, §2405, Oct. 24, 1992, 106 Stat. 3098 , provided that:

"(a) STUDIES.-The Secretary of the Interior, acting pursuant to the Federal reclamation laws (Act of June 17, 1902, 32 Stat. 388) [43 U.S.C. 371 et seq.], and Acts supplementary thereto and amendatory thereof, is authorized and directed to conduct feasibility investigations of opportunities to increase the amount of hydroelectric energy available for marketing by the Secretary from Federal hydroelectric power generation facilities resulting from a reduction in the consumptive use of such power for Federal reclamation project purposes or as a result of an increase in the amount of water available for such generation because of water conservation efforts on Federal reclamation projects or a combination thereof. The Secretary of the Interior is further authorized and directed to conduct feasibility investigations of opportunities to mitigate damages to or enhance fish and wildlife as a result of increasing the amount of water available for such purposes because of water conservation efforts on Federal reclamation projects. Such feasibility investigations shall include, but not be limited to-

"(1) an analysis of the technical, environmental, and economic feasibility of reducing the amount of water diverted upstream of such Federal hydroelectric power generation facilities by Federal reclamation projects;

"(2) an estimate of the reduction, if any, of project power consumed as a result of the decreased amount of diversion;

"(3) an estimate of the increase in the amount of electrical energy and related revenues which would result from the marketing of such power by the Secretary;

"(4) an estimate of the fish and wildlife benefits which would result from the decreased or modified diversions;

"(5) a finding by the Secretary of the Interior that the activities proposed in the feasibility study can be carried out in accordance with applicable Federal and State law, interstate compacts and the contractual obligations of the Secretary; and

"(6) a finding by the affected Federal Power Marketing Administrator that the hydroelectric component of the proposed water conservation feature is cost-effective and that the affected Administrator is able to market the hydro-electric power expected to be generated.

"(b) CONSULTATION.-In preparing feasibility studies pursuant to this section, the Secretary of the Interior shall consult with, and seek the recommendations of, affected State, local and Indian tribal interests, and shall provide for appropriate public comment.

"(c) AUTHORIZATION.-There is hereby authorized to be appropriated to the Secretary of the Interior such sums as may be necessary to carry out this section."

PROJECTS ON FRESH WATERS IN STATE OF HAWAII

Pub. L. 102-486, title XXIV, §2408, Oct. 24, 1992, 106 Stat. 3100 , provided that: "The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, in consultation with the State of Hawaii, shall carry out a study of hydroelectric

licensing in the State of Hawaii. For purposes of considering whether such licensing should be transferred to the State, within 18 months after the enactment of this Act [Oct. 24, 1992], the Commission shall complete the study and submit a report containing the results of the study to the Committee on Energy and Commerce of the United States House of Representatives and to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources of the United States Senate. The study shall examine, and the report shall at a minimum contain an analysis of, each of the following:

"(1) The State regulatory programs applicable to hydroelectric power production and the extent to which such programs are suitable as a substitute for regulation of such projects under the Federal Power Act [16 U.S.C. 791a et seq.], taking into consideration all aspects of such regulation, including energy, environmental, and safety considerations.

"(2) Any unique geographical, hydrological, or other characteristics of waterways in Hawaii or any other aspects of hydroelectric power development and natural resource protection in Hawaii that would justify or not justify the permanent transfer of Federal Energy Regulatory Commission jurisdiction over hydroelectric power projects to that State.

"(3) The adequacy of mechanisms and procedures for consideration of fish and wildlife and other environmental values applicable in connection with hydroelectric power development in Hawaii under the State programs referred to in paragraph (1).

"(4) Any national policy considerations that would justify or not justify the removal of Federal Energy Regulatory Commission jurisdiction over hydroelectric power projects in Hawaii.

"(5) The precedent-setting effect, if any, of provisions of law adopted by the Congress removing Federal Energy Regulatory Commission jurisdiction over hydroelectric power projects in Hawaii."

FEDERAL RULES OF CIVIL PROCEDURE

Subpoena, see rule 45, Title 28, Appendix, Judiciary and Judicial Procedure.

SECTION REFERRED TO IN OTHER SECTIONS

This section is referred to in sections 796, 803, 828b of this title; title 42 section 7172.