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# Biden-Harris Administration Invests \$430 Million to Upgrade America's Hydropower Infrastructure

Selected Projects Will Retain 6,000 American Jobs, See a Match of Over \$2.38 Billion in Private Sector Funding

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 4 min

*The Biden-Harris Administration's Investing in America Agenda Will Support 293 Projects Across 33 States to Improve Hydroelectric Facilities, Increase Dam Safety, Mitigate Fish and Wildlife Impacts, and Increase Access to Affordable, Carbon-free Electricity*

**WASHINGTON, D.C.**— As part of the Biden-Harris Administration’s Investing in America agenda, the Department of Energy (DOE) today announced the selection of 293 hydroelectric improvement projects across 33 states that will receive up to \$430 million in incentive payments to upgrade hydropower facilities – in operation for an average of 79 years. Administered by the Grid Deployment Office (GDO) and funded by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, the [Maintaining and Enhancing Hydroelectricity Incentives](#) program will enhance dam safety, improve grid resilience at 215 facilities, and protect 6,000 existing jobs at hydropower facilities as well as contractors and vendors.

“As our earliest form of renewable energy generation, hydropower has reliably kept America running for almost 150 years—and the Biden-Harris Administration is ensuring these long-standing facilities can continue the steady flow of clean power,” **U.S. Secretary of Energy Jennifer M. Granholm**. “Today’s funding will expand and modernize our hydropower fleet, while protecting thousands of American jobs.”

Hydropower currently accounts for nearly 27% of renewable electricity generation in the United States, as well as 93% of all utility-scale energy storage. However, the fleet is aging, with many facilities in need of repair and upgrades.

### **DOE’s commitment to hydroelectric facilities across the United States**

The Investing in America agenda supports capital improvements directly related to three main areas of hydropower: improving grid resilience, improving dam safety, and enabling environmental and recreational improvements to hydropower facilities. Within DOE’s portfolio and funded by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, the Maintaining and Enhancing Hydroelectricity Incentives are complemented by two additional hydroelectric incentives: the [Hydroelectric Production Incentives](#), providing incentive payments to qualified hydroelectric facilities for electricity generated and sold and the [Hydroelectric Efficiency Improvement Incentives](#), providing payments to increase power generation from the nation’s existing hydropower fleet.

The 293 projects announced today will:

#### **Strengthen grid resilience at hydropower dams by:**

- Replacing or upgrading turbines and generators
- Upgrading control systems

- Upgrading cables and transformers
- Upgrading penstocks, which transport water to the turbines

**Improve dam safety** by upgrading aging dam infrastructure and strengthening existing infrastructure against extreme weather events. The average number of years selected facilities have been in operation is 79 years. Specific examples of projects include:

- Upgrades to emergency spillways, which channel extra water during heavy rains
- Concrete replacement to prevent water seepage through the dam
- Water conveyance repairs to improve how the dam controls water movement
- Upgrades to gates
- Upgrades to prevent overtopping of dam walls
- Erosion repair on the dam and surrounding areas

**Facilitate environmental and recreational improvements to hydropower infrastructure that will improve water conditions and expand surrounding habitat and passage for fish and other species**, and upgrade recreational facilities near dams. For example:

- Fish passage projects will install fish ladders or other equipment to enable fish and other aquatic species to pass through the dam and/or the turbine. Some projects will also improve or expand the wildlife habitat surrounding the dam.
- Water quality projects will deploy special turbines that reduce the loss of oxygen in water as it runs through the turbine to generate electricity. Water quality projects might also improve aquatic habitats downstream of the dam, as well as benefit species of conservation concern or cultural significance to Indian Tribes.
- Recreation projects will establish or maintain recreational facilities and opportunities near the dam, which might include expanding water access for boating; improving access for other recreational activities, such as kayaking and white-water rafting; and enhancing walking trails.

These investments also advance the President's Justice40 Initiative, which sets a goal that 40% of the overall benefits of certain federal climate, clean energy, affordable and sustainable housing, and other investments flow to disadvantaged communities that are marginalized by underinvestment and overburdened by pollution.

The full list of selections can be found [online](#). In addition, the Grid Deployment Office will host a public webinar on the selections on September 11, 2024 from 1:00 to 1:30pm ET. [Registration is required](#).

DOE anticipates releasing a second round for [Maintaining and Enhancing Hydroelectric Incentives](#) next calendar year.

Learn more about the [Grid Deployment Office](#).

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