

Hydropower Rethink: Resilient Enough To Carry Us Past Fossil Fuels? (Follow up, “Approaching Dead Pool-the Great Wet Hope”)*



Lake Mead Reservoir. Photo by Bridget Bennett/Reuters

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Hydropower Rethink: Resilient Enough To Carry Us Past Fossil Fuels? (A noteworthy addition to our previous climate risk article, “Approaching Dead Pool-the Great Wet Hope”*..) The adverse impact on hydropower production due to global drought this year is significant. Electricity from hydropower produced 16% of combined renewable energy worldwide in 2021. Both major types of hydropower plants, using rivers spinning turbines and reservoirs were significantly impacted. Investments in new hydro plants has dropped since 2020. ¹

Lakes Powell and Mead* the largest reservoirs in the US have fallen to drastically low levels. Areas of China experienced the hottest summer in 60 years and the mighty Yangtze River is at its lowest level ever recorded. The water flowing from it to power plants was halved. Sichuan Province rationed power by closing factories in 19 cities. The low rainfall and heat in Europe further stressed nations reeling from the War in Ukraine and Russia’s decision to cut the natural gas supply to Europe. Norway, Europe’s largest hydroelectric supplier, warned that it might have to cut its electricity supply.

Hydropower may not be able to supply the ‘fill-in’ electrons needed to bridge the solar and wind gap. That’s where newer renewable energy storage, like battery arrays, may become critical to help balance the grid. Investments in grid scale battery storage in China and the US is expected to double in 2022. This signals opportunities for resilient and agile businesses and business leaders.

*"Approaching Dead Pool in the Western USA: the Great Wet Hope", www.linkco.net/articles/

CAN INNOVATIVE Business Solutions Save Our Planet? If we do not act now, and embrace the “great wet hope”, we can anticipate the economic devastation, aridization, and desertification. This has a close connection to land degradation, water source mismanagement, climate change, and drought as evidenced in the Western USA and globally. **Time is up.** Human survival is on the line. Solutions are viable but costly. The potential business leadership opportunities are compelling as are the potential for global and local public-private partnerships.^{2,3}

Share your solutions with us at LINKCO! How is your business helping to solve the challenges associated with climate change? We constantly note and summarize lessons learned as well as best practices to help business leaders gain perspective and insights.

1. “Drought Saps Hydropower” WSJ, Anna Hirtenstein and Katherine Blunt, 09/12/2022.

https://www.wsj.com/articles/global-drought-saps-hydropower-complicating-clean-energy-push-11662758968?st=9mlww4oymtregab&reflink=desktopwebshare_permalink

2. BlackRock Is Buying Renewable Natural Gas Producer for \$700 Million, Amrith Ramkumar, WSJ, 7/20/2022. https://www.wsj.com/articles/blackrock-is-buying-renewable-natural-gas-producer-for-700-million-11658311201?mod=Searchresults_pos1&page=1

3. <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/world-atlas-desertification-rethinking-land-degradation-and-sustainable-management>

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