

U.S. Department of Energy - Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy
Water Power Program

Benefits of Hydropower

Hydropower offers advantages over other energy sources but faces unique environmental challenges.

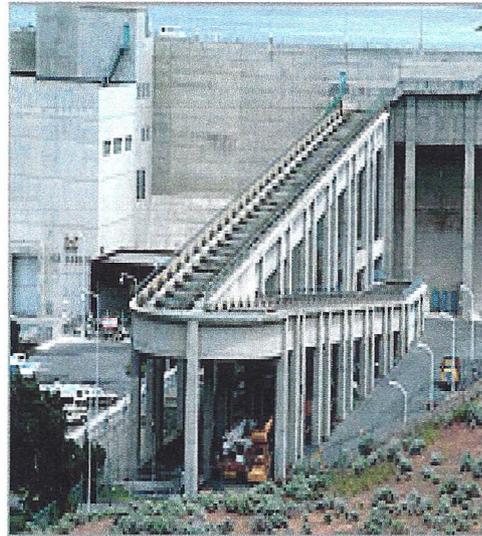
Hydropower is fueled by water, so it's a clean fuel source. Hydropower doesn't pollute the air like power plants that burn fossil fuels, such as coal or natural gas.

Hydropower is a domestic source of energy, produced in the United States.

Hydropower relies on the water cycle, which is driven by the sun, thus it's a renewable power source.

Hydropower is generally available as needed; engineers can control the flow of water through the turbines to produce electricity on demand.

Hydropower plants provide benefits in addition to clean electricity. Impoundment hydropower creates reservoirs that offer a variety of recreational opportunities, notably fishing, swimming, and boating. Most hydropower installations are required to provide some public access to the reservoir to allow the public to take advantage of these opportunities. Other benefits may include water supply and flood control.



This fish ladder on the Ice Harbor Dam on the lower Snake River provides safe passage for migrating fish.