



Certification Criteria

Assessing whether a facility is Low Impact requires a comprehensive evaluation. Low Impact is not defined by size or specific operational parameters alone, but by all of the following:

- **Water quality** supportive of fish & wildlife resources and human uses
- Safe, timely & effective **upstream** and **downstream fish passage**
- Protection, mitigation & enhancement of the soils, vegetation, & ecosystem functions in the **watershed**
- **Ecological flow** regimes that support healthy habitats
- Protection of threatened and **endangered species**.
- Avoidance of impacts on **cultural and historic resources**
- **Recreation access** is provided without fee or charge

Opportunities and Assurances

The Low Impact Hydropower Institute (LIHI) offers the nation's only independent certification and verification program for environmentally-responsible hydropower. LIHI is dedicated to reducing the impacts of hydropower by recognizing projects which actively protect river ecosystems. LIHI Certification allows owners access to market-based and reputational incentives. Less environmental impact means more opportunities for the project to thrive.

Existing hydropower facilities, as well as new projects constructed at non-powered dams and conduit projects, are eligible for Certification. Projects on dams recommended for removal are not eligible. Upon application and approval, LIHI certifies qualified hydropower facilities that satisfy eight Certification Criteria, developed by a team of NGOs and industry representatives through a public process.

No technology is without environmental impact. Hydropower is uniquely intertwined with the natural world around it, which can raise its environmental risk profile. Only hydropower facilities that meet strict, science-based guidelines to protect river habitat and resources receive Low Impact Certification. The Certification gives owners access to regulatory and voluntary power markets, providing a return on the environmental investment.





Bear River, Idaho, LIHI Cert #53

About LIHI

The LIHI standard was established in 2000 by a coalition of environmental organizations led by American Rivers and Green Mountain Energy Company, with the assistance of the Center for Resource Solutions and representatives of the hydropower industry, environmental organizations, renewable power marketers, and other environmental stakeholders. The national environmental organizations listed below are among those that have provided representation to LIHI's Governing Board and/or Advisory Panels. The LIHI structure also includes advisory input from the hydropower industry, renewable energy marketers, and state and federal resource management agencies.

Raising Public Awareness and Confidence

No technology is without environmental impact. Hydropower is uniquely intertwined with the natural world around it, which can raise the environmental risk profile. LIHI Certification is designed to inform public choice in energy markets and to reduce environmental impacts through market-based incentives. The LIHI standard assures consumers that their hydropower-based electricity has been independently verified as generated under strict, science-based guidelines that protect river habitat and resources.

LIHI Stats

129 certificates | 197 facilities | 23 states | 84 Rivers

4 GW capacity: more than the amount of solar capacity installed in Texas and Massachusetts combined (seia.org)

15,000 GWh annual generation: – enough to power more than 1.3 million average US households per year (eia.gov)

11 million metric tons of carbon emissions avoided per year: same as that sequestered by 13 million acres of US forest per year (epa.gov)

"We believe that combating climate change with renewable energy can be balanced with protecting the existing environment. Combating climate change should not mean sacrificing ecosystems. Low Impact Certified projects demonstrate that electricity can be generated while still protecting, and often improving, habitats."

Shannon Ames, LIHI Executive Director

LIHI Board, Advisors & Founders:

The Nature Conservancy



WATER AND POWER
LAW GROUP PC



Union of
Concerned Scientists
Science for a healthy planet and safer world

Board members represent themselves, not necessarily their organizations



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