



# 2025 ANNUAL REPORT

LOW IMPACT HYDROPOWER INSTITUTE

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# A Word From Our Leaders

2025 has been a year of steady growth and strategic, purposeful engagement. At the Low Impact Hydropower Institute, we have always believed that good environmental stewardship is not a destination but a practice — one that must be continually refined through research, community input, and collaboration.

In pursuing this practice, LIHI took steps to complete the first dual certification of the Ma'an Hydropower Station on the Dajia River in Taiwan with the Hydropower Sustainability Alliance (HSA). The rigorous joint assessment culminated in the project earning both LIHI's Low Impact Hydropower Certification and the HSA's Certified Silver status. This pilot demonstrated that complementary certification frameworks can strengthen one another, laying the groundwork and potential for a second dual-certification project in the United States.

We also continued our multi-year effort to define a low-impact pumped storage hydropower certification program. After convening advisors from across the hydropower community and drafting a working definition, we opened a public comment period in early 2025. This work is foundational as pumped storage helps balance our renewable energy grid, driving new development. Establishing a credible, science-based standard will be essential for identifying responsible, low-impact pumped hydropower storage projects.

Throughout all of this, we remain committed to two core priorities: supporting project owners in achieving credible, science-based certification, and ensuring that impacted communities — especially Tribal nations and those historically underrepresented — have meaningful access to and participation in the processes that shape the rivers and landscapes around them. These priorities are not in tension. They are what make our certification worth holding.

As the energy transition accelerates and pressure on river ecosystems grows, LIHI's role remains critical. We are grateful to our certificate holders, reviewers, stakeholders, and supporters who share our conviction that hydropower can — and must — be a force for an equitable clean energy future.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Shannon Ames".

**Shannon Ames,**  
Executive Director



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kelly Catlett".

**Kelly Catlett**  
Acting Board Chair

# LIHI at a Glance

## MISSION

We recognize and support hydropower that prioritizes environmental, recreational, historical, and cultural resource protection.

## VISION

We envision a world where hydropower puts people and the environment first.

## WHAT IS THE LIHI CERTIFICATION?

The Low Impact Hydropower Institute Certification Program provides a rigorous, science-based framework for recognizing hydropower facilities that protect people, rivers, and ecosystems. Applications are evaluated against a set of eight environmental, cultural, and recreational criteria. These criteria address the primary areas of social and ecological impact associated with hydropower, including clearly defined goals to ensure that every certified facility meets the program's high standards. By achieving LIHI Certification, projects demonstrate that they operate in a way that protects river ecosystems, respects community and cultural values, and contributes to the economic viability of renewable hydropower.



## CORE VALUES

- **Water Stewardship:** Natural flowing waters are essential to healthy life on earth. We strive to protect water's natural, social, and cultural values.
- **Low Impact Hydropower:** Hydropower can operate in a low impact way that ensures ecosystems and communities can thrive. We support Low Impact hydropower that achieves this goal as a valuable resource in the clean energy transition.
- **Transparency:** Transparency builds trust and fosters accountability. We seek public input and communicate openly and honestly about the considerations underlying our decisions.
- **Integrity:** Inclusivity and consistency lead to higher quality outcomes. We value different viewpoints and approach our decisions with neutrality, devoid of personal interests or external pressures.
- **Data-driven:** Quality information leads to better decisions. To ensure our actions are grounded in science and reason, we rely on data, facts, and evidence, and we evolve if new information calls for change.
- **Collaboration:** Common ground and shared goals are the path to progress. To do this, we encourage kind, open, and candid conversations with all individuals and organizations, regardless of affiliation. We value and actively seek diverse perspectives to build mutual understanding and enduring connections.

# LIHI Goes International

In January 2026, LIHI and the Hydropower Sustainability Alliance (HSA) announced the successful dual certification of the Ma'an Hydropower Station on the Dajia River in Taichung City, Taiwan — the first project anywhere in the world to complete a joint review under both organizations' frameworks.

The 133.5 MW facility was assessed between May and November 2025 across a comprehensive range of criteria, including river flows, water quality, fish passage, biodiversity, cultural heritage, governance, and community engagement. Ma'an earned LIHI's Low Impact Hydropower Certification (LIHI #207-I) and the HSA's Certified Silver status under the Hydropower Sustainability Standard. Both assessment reports are available at [lowimpacthydro.org/maan-daija-river](https://lowimpacthydro.org/maan-daija-river).

The assessment confirmed year-round ecological flows supporting aquatic habitat, active sediment management, multiple fish passage routes, and protections for three protected fish species. It also recognized the cultural heritage of the Atayal Indigenous people through community engagement and support for traditional activities. As with many LIHI certifications, approval was granted with conditions — reflecting our commitment to continuous improvement rather than a one-time stamp of approval.

Both organizations are now seeking a second dual-certification pilot project in the United States. The results of these pilots will determine whether LIHI officially opens certification to international facilities. Hydropower facilities interested in learning more are encouraged to reach out to LIHI at [info@lowimpacthydro.org](mailto:info@lowimpacthydro.org).

# Pumped Storage Hydropower Update

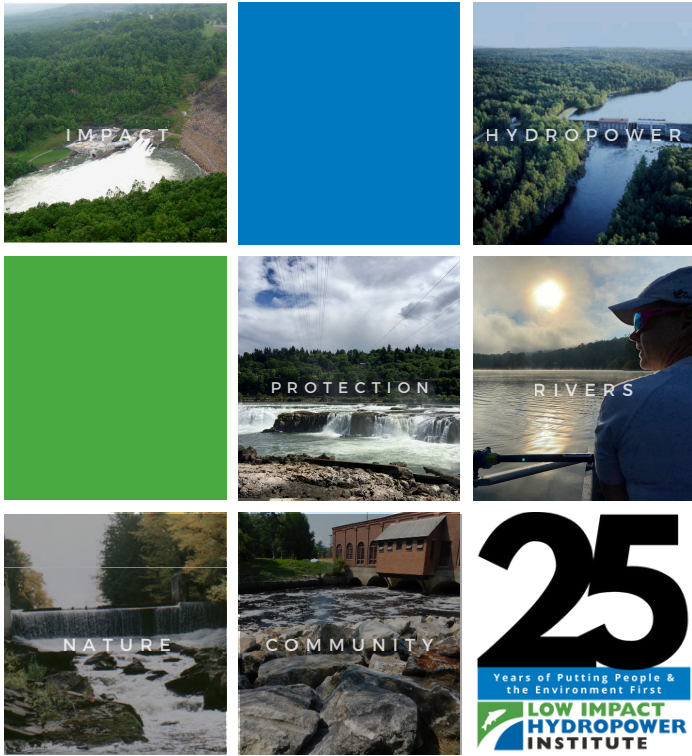
Building on the more than twenty advisory group meetings held in 2024, LIHI released an initial draft definition of Low Impact Pumped Storage Hydropower for public comment in February 2025. The comment period ran through May 2025, drawing input from a broad range of stakeholders across the hydropower community.

LIHI staff, the LIHI Board's LI-PSH Task Force, and the Advisory Group carefully reviewed all comments received and used them to develop a revised second draft definition — one that encompasses eleven impact areas, each with science-based goals and measurable standards. That second draft was opened for public comment in December 2025.

With two rounds of public input now complete, LIHI is moving toward a final definition. Once finalized, the LIHI Governing Board will consider whether to establish a formal Low Impact certification program for pumped storage projects — including potential incentives for achieving certification and educational opportunities for the broader energy storage community.

Be sure to follow the project page for more updates: [lowimpacthydro.org/low-impact-pumped-storage-public-comment-9298](https://lowimpacthydro.org/low-impact-pumped-storage-public-comment-9298).

Getty Stock Image



# 2025 Marked 25 Years of Progress



**Hundreds** of Projects.  
**One** Shared Standard.



For over two decades, we have certified hundreds of hydropower facilities across the country, with cutting-edge research, education, outreach, and performance-based criteria in eight resource areas--river flows, water quality, fish passage and protection, watershed protection, threatened and endangered species, cultural and historic resources, recreational and public access, and communications with stakeholders, providing accountability and transparency.

As we look forward to the next 25 years, LIHI remains committed to advancing innovation in hydropower technology, strengthening Indigenous and community engagement, expanding certification to more facilities nationwide, and ensuring hydropower remains a part of a just and clean energy future.

**325**

facilities  
certified since  
LIHI's founding

**24**

states with  
certified  
projects

**16.25**

million MWh of  
certified low-impact  
hydropower  
generation annually

**1,235**

miles of rivers  
protected or  
restored

# Impact by the Numbers

LIHI continues to provide a trusted benchmark for meaningful environmental performance, ensuring that renewable energy doesn't come at the expense of rivers, wildlife, or communities. Here's how the LIHI Certification Program is helping hydropower facilities improve sustainable practices and drive innovation.

## 186

Active Certificates in 2025

representing **330** powerhouses and dams in **24** states, on **106** rivers, and **13** canal systems.

LIHI Certified projects supplied nearly

## 4,446 MW

of capacity and an average of **16,239 GWh** of electricity. Certificates range in size from **10 kW** of capacity to **805 MW** and **10 kW** to **450 MW** for individual powerhouses.


## LIHI Certified Facilities Put the Environment and People **FIRST**


 **1,200**  
miles of protected rivers.


 **1,000**  
recreational and public access amenities provided.

 *Nearly* **30%**  
have taken steps to go above and beyond to minimize their impacts.

## Program Performance

 Nearly **39.5%** of applications to LIHI do not result in certification.

 Half of those, **20%**, are not certified because they do not meet the criteria.

 LIHI has certified **11.4%** of all LIHI-eligible, FERC-regulated projects.

LIHI Certified hydropower projects are proving that clean energy can also mean environmental and community stewardship.

### 63%

of facilities protect onsite cultural or historic resources.

### 65%

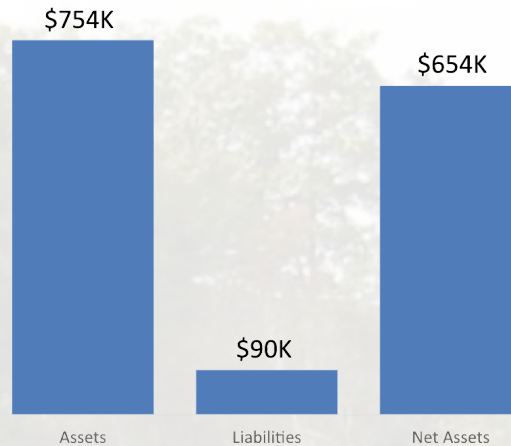
of facilities provide fish passage.

### 95%

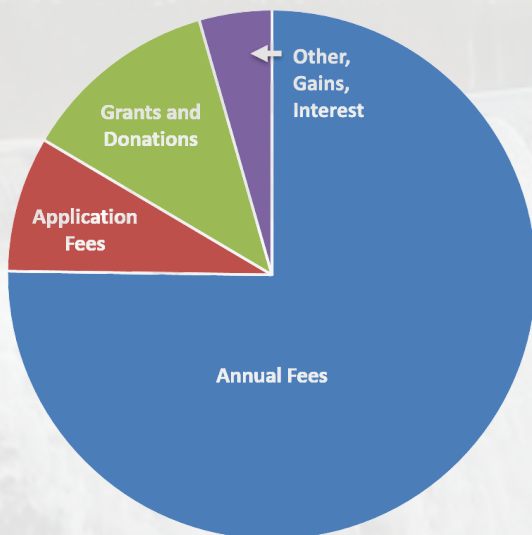
of facilities minimize impacts to threatened or endangered species.

# Financial Overview

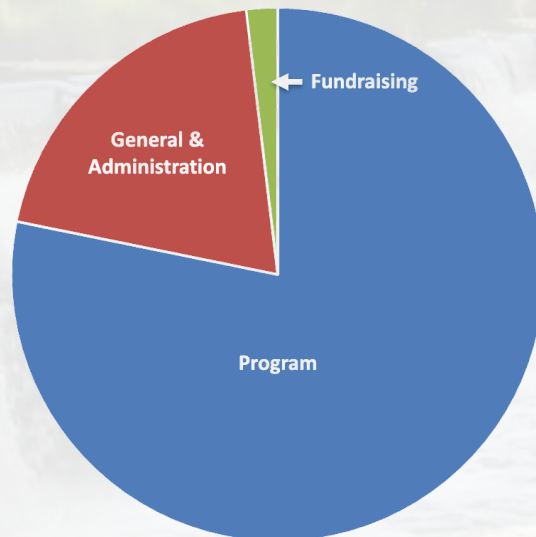
LIHI maintains a strong financial position with solid net assets, minimal liabilities, and highly efficient, mission-focused spending. LIHI is adhering to its strategic management of cash reserves by keeping cash on hand low while maximizing returns in money market and investment accounts. LIHI exceeds its intention of having 6 months of cash reserves. LIHI's revenue is stable but highly concentrated in the core certificate program.



## Revenue



## Expenses



LIHI continues to demonstrate proactive financial management and will be exploring revenue diversification.



## Governing Board

### **KELLY CATLETT**

Acting Board Chair, Policy Committee,  
Executive Management Committee  
*American Rivers, CA*

### **JULIE MCNAMARA**

Director, Policy Committee (Chair),  
*Union of Concerned Scientists, MA*

### **LISA ZAREK**

Board Treasurer, Finance Committee (Chair)  
*Lake Charles Improvement Association FL*

### **RICK GLICK**

Board Secretary, Policy Committee  
*Davis Wright Tremaine (retired), OR*

### **T.J. HEIBEL**

Director, Technical Committee,  
Communications Committee (Chair)  
*Pacific Northwest National Laboratories, DC*

### **MARK ZAKUTANSKY**

Director, Technical Committee (Chair)  
*Appalachian Mountain Club, PA*

### **NATALIE GRIFFITHS**

Director, Technical Committee  
*Oak Ridge National Lab, TN*

### **ANDREW BAER**

Director, Communications Committee  
*S&P Global, CO*

### **VICKI TAYLOR**

Director, Executive Management Committee  
*Catawba-Wateree Relicensing Coalition, NC*

### **ELLEN VOSS**

Director, Technical Committee  
*River Alliance of Wisconsin*

### **NALNEESH GAUR**

Director, Finance Committee,  
Communications Committee  
*PricewaterhouseCoopers, TX*

### **TED WISE**

Director, Technical Committee  
*Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife  
(retired), WaterWatch Oregon, OR*

### **MARK BEVELHIMER**

Director, Technical Committee  
*Oak Ridge National Lab (retired),  
Tennessee Citizens for Wilderness Planning, TN*

## Staff

### **SHANNON AMES**

Executive Director

### **MARYALICE FISCHER**

Certification Program Director

### **SURABHI KARAMBELKAR**

Policy Director

### **WHITNEY STOVALL**

Communications Manager

### **WHITMAN CONSTANTINEAU**

Administrative Manager

# Advisors

## Hydropower Industry Advisors

**ELIZABETH ABLOW**

Seattle City Light, WA

**SARAH HILL-NELSON**

Bowersock Mills Hydroelectric Project, KS

**MADELEINE MINEAU**

Essex Hydro, NH

**DAN PARKER**

Consultant, NY

**JON PETRILLO**

Riparian Strategies, RI

**JOHN RAGONESE**

Great River Hydro (retired), NH

**JOHN TEDESCO**

Green Mountain Power, VT

**KATE STIRR**

Natel Energy, CA

**KELSEY RUGANI**

Kearns & West, CA

**RANDY DORMAN**

Brookfield Renewable Energy Group, ME

## Executive Advisors

**SHAWN SEAMAN**

Maryland Department of Natural Resources, MD

**JACK PALMER**

Kleinschmidt (retired), DE

**DAVID YOULEN**

Eagle Creek Renewable Energy, NJ

**RICHARD ROOS-COLLINS**

Former Chair of the Governing Board  
Water and Power Law Group, CA

## Renewable Markets Advisors

**PHILIP RAPHALS**

Helios Centre, QC

**JENNIFER MARTIN**

Center for Resource Solutions, CA



IMAGE: LIHI Project #38 - Rumford Falls Middle Dam Impoundment, Maine

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