



GUEST VIEW: Hydropower is about clean energy, reliability, jobs and secure future

Curt Aikens

The Appeal Democrat

Aug 23, 2019

https://www.appeal-democrat.com/opinion/guest-view-hydropower-is-about-clean-energy-reliability-jobs-and-secure-future/article_097f214c-c612-11e9-838c-3b6ba76549ab.html

On Friday, Yuba Water Agency joined hydropower facilities all around the country in recognizing National Hydropower Day. Did we get the day off work? Kids get out of school? Sorry to disappoint. It wasn't that kind of day. But for us, it was a day to take a moment and celebrate the wonderful bounty that hydropower brings to Yuba County, in the way of jobs, clean energy, and revenue to help make this place even better.

From a big picture perspective, hydropower is America's oldest renewable resource, and has provided (and will continue to provide) undeniable contributions to our clean energy infrastructure and electrical grid resiliency.

It integrates beautifully with solar and wind power, and plays an essential role in securing California's energy future.

But closer to home, here in Yuba County, hydropower employs about 70 people, with some of the best jobs in the region. I'm completely biased, but I also think it's just a great place to work.

We generate enough clean energy to supply electricity to more than 300,000 homes.

But hydro is also one of the key factors in the renewal and reinvigoration of Yuba County's economy.

We sell our hydroelectricity, and the revenue we earn is reinvested in critical infrastructure and projects to reduce the risk of flood and fire and secure our water supply. It's invested in creating water related curriculum and programming to enhance our schools and help our kids flourish. And it's invested in projects to ensure the long-term health and viability of our most critical asset, the Yuba River, through environmental sustainability projects that will improve habitat for fish and wildlife.

Those are just some of the many ways we are casting a wide net in pursuit of our vision: A prosperous and thriving Yuba County and elevated quality of life for residents achieved through strategic water resource management and community investment.

It is hydropower that makes all of that possible.

So join us in raising a glass (of water, of course) in celebration of hydropower. It is so much more than just a way to turn the lights on.

The author is general manager of the Yuba Water Agency.