

Backgrounder:

Energy Professionals on hydroelectric power

While the electricity industry in Ontario has had its share of controversies over the last few years, there is almost no controversy over the place of hydroelectricity in the province's generation mix.

Hydroelectric is:

- ◆ cheap
- ◆ dependable
- ◆ renewable
- ◆ almost without environmental harm (once built), and even brings some environmental benefits

And yet, though in 1989 Ontario Hydro identified over 2400MW of relatively easy development—both new plant and changes to existing plant—only 10MW has been completed.

River/system	Plant/site	MW (capacity)	GWh (annually)
Niagara	Beck Diversion	50	1,750
	Beck 1 Frequency Conversion	70	?
	Beck 2 rehab	192	?
Welland	Lake Gibson	5	40
Mattagami	Smokey Falls	182	508
	Little Long	61	67
	Harmon	68	97
	Kipling	68	93
	Cypress Falls	42	106
Abitibi	Abitibi Canyon	463	1,111
	Otter Rapids	174	430
	Nine Mile Rapids	295	726
	Blacksmith Rapids	140	369
	Sand Rapids, Allan Rapids	262	703
Moose	Renison	135	555
Montreal	Ragged Chute	98	177
Little Jackfish	Little Jackfish	132	568
Various	Northeast conversion	9	25
	Lac Seul Powerhouse	14	52
		~2,400	~5,300

For further detail, see Ontario Hydro Demand/Supply study, 1989. Some figures not available. The "Beck diversion" project was recently approved by the government, and is going ahead.

The Society of Energy Professionals believes that Ontario's waterpower is a public trust. In a time where there is some alarm over the supply of electricity, we find it to ignore realistic possibilities for expanding hydroelectric generation. Maximizing Ontario's hydroelectric potential should be the OPG's and the government's first priority.