The Oregon Renewable Portfolio Standards (RPS) law states that “hydroelectric energy is an important renewable energy source” and designates three sources of hydroelectricity as eligible for the Oregon RPS (ORS 469A.010 (3)).

The RPS sets targets for acquiring new, renewable sources of energy (e.g. 25% of 2025), allowing each complying utility to determine the best mix of new renewable sources. The three types of hydroelectricity that are eligible for the Oregon RPS are:

**Hydroelectric Efficiency Upgrades**: electricity from efficiency upgrades made to the facility after Jan. 1, 1995. Limitations are made to Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) facilities in that only the portion that is attributable to Oregon’s share of the electricity generation may be used to comply.

**Low-Impact Hydroelectric Projects**: electricity from projects that have been certified by the Low-Impact Hydropower Institute (LIHI, [www.lowimpacthydro.org](http://www.lowimpacthydro.org)). In order to be certified by LIHI a facility must meet criteria in the following areas: river flows, water quality, fish passage and protection, watershed protection, threatened and endangered species protection, cultural resource protection, recreation, and not recommended for removal. In one compliance year, a utility can use no more than 50 aMW² of generation from LIHI-certified facilities owned by Oregon utilities; and 40 aMW from LIHI-certified facilities not owned by a utility and located in Oregon (90 aMW or 788,400 MWh/RECs total per year³).


Hydropower accounts for about 43% of Oregon’s electricity resource mix⁵. Recognizing this, the Oregon RPS hydropower provisions create incentives for improved operations such as reducing the footprint of existing hydropower plants and increasing hydropower plant efficiency.

The law also ensures that utilities do not have to take hydropower out of their power mix in order to meet the RPS in Oregon. Utilities do not have to replace any electricity available to them under contracts from dams that are owned by Washington public utility districts and are located between the

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1 Facilities must be located within the boundaries of the Western Electricity Coordinating Council.
2 An aMW is an average megawatt or the amount of electricity produced by the continuous production of one megawatt over the period of one year (or 8,760 megawatt hours).
3 One Renewable Energy Certificate (REC) is equal to one MWh.
4 Now called the Northwest Power and Conservation Council
5 Oregon Electricity Resource Mix 2009-2011
Grand Coulee Dam and the Columbia River’s junction with the Snake River.\textsuperscript{6} Consumer owned utilities are not required to comply with the RPS to the extent that compliance would require the utility to reduce its purchases of the lowest priced electricity from BPA.\textsuperscript{7} No utility is required to substitute qualifying electricity for electricity derived from an energy source other than coal, natural gas or petroleum.\textsuperscript{8} As of July 2013 there are 62 Oregon RPS-certified hydroelectricity facilities which account for more than 13 percent of all registered Oregon RPS facilities by megawatt share.\textsuperscript{9}

\begin{figure}
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{resources_registered.png}
\caption{Resources Registered for the RPS by MW Share\textsuperscript{1}}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{6} ORS 469A.060(2)(a)
\textsuperscript{7} ORS 469A.060(3)
\textsuperscript{8} ORS 469A.060(b)
\textsuperscript{9} As of June 2013, this analysis does not include the LIHI caps placed on Oregon utility-owned and non-utility owned facilities.