

Press review 3 – 25 January 2013

Study Finds U.S. Funding of Locks and Dams Ranks Among Worst in World

Source: American Soybean Association
Created: January 16, 2013

Foreign projects finish on time and budget despite being bigger, more complex than U.S. projects

The **Soy Transportation Coalition** (STC), which includes ASA, 11 state soybean boards, and the United Soybean Board (USB), released a study entitled "New Approaches for U.S. Lock and Dam Maintenance and Funding." The study was conducted by the Texas Transportation Institute at Texas A&M University and highlights the inadequacies of the current efforts of managing our lock and dam system and the potential for alternative funding and maintenance strategies to achieve better results. The study compared major waterways infrastructure projects in other countries, such as the Panama Canal expansion, with those in the United States.

These foreign projects have been completed on time and on budget despite being bigger and more complex than U.S. projects. The Olmsted Lock and Dam project is a prime example of the inefficiency of U.S. waterways infrastructure projects, as its original cost estimate of \$775 million was recently updated to over \$3.1 billion with a significant time horizon remaining before it will be completed.

The STC study examines the reasons for the cost overruns and project delays, focusing on the role that the current piecemeal and unpredictable financing process has on project delivery in the U.S. Read more about this study in the **Checkoff News** section.

The U.S. waterways industry, of which ASA is a stakeholder and supporter, has for many years advocated and lobbied for funding to modernize and construct new, larger locks and dams on the Upper Mississippi River. Unfortunately, the fiscal challenges facing our country as well as the dysfunctional legislative process have resulted in little progress.

As the Water Resources Development Act is due for reauthorization in 2013, ASA will raise some of the issues and ideas examined in the STC study with other agricultural groups, waterways industry partners, and Congress in an effort to achieve the optimal waterways transportation system that takes into account fiscal and legislative realities.

Vietnam, Cambodia and donors challenge Laos on Mekong dams

Date: January 18, 2013

By: [CleanBiz.Asia Staff](#)

<http://www.cleanbiz.asia/news/vietnam-cambodia-and-donors-challenge-laos-mekong-dams>

At yesterday's opening session of 19th Mekong River Commission (MRC) Council Meeting, being held in the Laoation city of Luang Prabang, heated debate occurred over the host country's construction of the Xayaburi Dam and its plans to build a cascade of dams on the Lower Mekong River.

According to participants at the meeting, MRC governments disagreed about the prior consultation procedures and how they had been applied in the case of the Xayaburi Dam. The Cambodian delegation asserted that Laos had misinterpreted the Mekong Agreement and that the prior consultation process had never been completed. Meanwhile, Vietnam requested that no further developments on the Mekong mainstream occur until the Mekong mainstream dams study agreed upon at least year's Council Meeting is completed. **The official opening statements** from Council members reveal that Cambodia and Vietnam have not changed their opposition to the Xayaburi Dam and other mainstream dams.

In his opening statement Nguyen Thai Lai, Vietnam's Deputy Minister of Natural Resources and the Environment, diplomatically chastised the Lao government, stating that the "launching of the first mainstream hydropower project recently in the Lower Mekong Basin is causing concerns of the Governments of the riparian countries in the region and the international community about its adverse impacts on downstream areas.

"While we are still trying to do the research to understand its impacts, each riparian country should show their responsibility by assuring that any future development and management of water resources proposed in the basin should be considered with due care and full precaution based on best scientific understanding of the potential impacts," said Nguyen.

The Cambodian and Thai Council members both asked that the Mekong mainstream dams impact study be completed as soon as possible to ensure that future decisions about mainstream dams are informed by good science.

Meanwhile, in a **Joint Statement made by the MRC's Development Partners**, donor governments expressed the need for consensus amongst the MRC governments on Mekong dams due to their trans-boundary impacts and requested that the Lao government disclose the Xayaburi Dam's project design, while taking into account the concerns of their neighbors. The statement said: "It is our consensus that building dams on the mainstream of the Mekong may irrevocably change the river and hence constitute a challenge for food security, sustainable development, and biodiversity conservation."

MRC Development Partners also recommended in their statement that all ambiguities in the prior consultation process be resolved before any other mainstream project proceeds.

Throughout the MRC prior consultation process, reservations over the Xayaburi Dam and the flawed decision-making process have been expressed by the Cambodian and Vietnamese governments. Divisions between MRC member countries have remained since the MRC's Special Joint Committee Meeting held on April 19th, 2011, in at which the Lao government proposed to proceed with the project.

In contrast, the governments of Thailand, Cambodia and Vietnam called for an extension to the decision-making process, citing concerns about trans-boundary impacts and knowledge gaps that require both further study and public consultation. Vietnam requested a ten-year moratorium on decisions over mainstream dams.

<http://www.zbc.co.zw/news-categories/top-stories/27541-major-dams-now-spilling.html>

Major dams now spilling

Tuesday, 15 January 2013 16:58

Most major dams in the northern parts of the country are now spilling while the southern parts of the country might continue to face water problems as water bodies in those areas have recorded little rainfall.

According to data received from the **Zimbabwe** National Water Authority (ZINWA), most water bodies in the northern parts of the country are almost full.

Harare's major water supplier, Lake Chivero is 101% full despite the capital experiencing water shortages.

Another dam which supplies the capital, Manyame, is 79,5% full.

Though Exchange Dam in Mazowe is 91,4% full, the bigger dam Mazowe is however only 18% full.

Mazvikadei is 93,1% full.

Zimunya Dam in Manicaland is 100% full with Wenimbi in the Save catchment 95% full.

Exchange Dam in the Gwayi catchment area is spilling at 102% and Mtshabezi is at 90,9% full.

While dams in the northern parts of the country are almost full, it is a different scenario in the southern side where some dams such as Upper Ncema is only 1,1% full

with Lower Ncema only 7,2% full.

Water woes for Bulawayo are far from over as Mzingwane is only 8,6% full.

Siya Dam in the Save catchment area, which is used for irrigation is at 9,1% full while Mutirikwi Dam, which is used for water supply and irrigation is just above 12%.

Manjirenji is just over 27% full.

Due to incessant rains in the northern sides, the amount of water in the Zambezi River has been increasing and communities residing along the valley area have been warned to be on high alert as floods might occur.

Water from dams reserved for drinking, says deputy CM

TNN Jan 20, 2013, 04.31AM IST

PUNE: Deputy chief minister Ajit Pawar on Saturday said that water in dams will be strictly used to meet drinking water needs. Pawar also appealed to the citizens to use water judiciously as the state was facing severe water crisis.

He was speaking to reporters on the sidelines of a meeting of the Nationalist Congress Party here.

Pawar said, "Citizens, especially in downstream areas, are demanding release of water from dams located upstream, to meet drinking water needs as dams in their areas have either dried up or have low water levels. We have decided to release water from upstream dams if reservoirs located in downstream areas go dry before the arrival of monsoon. We recently applied a similar principle when water was released in the Jayakwadi reservoir to meet water requirements in Marathwada."

Pawar said that the government has set priorities for water release. Top priority has been given to drinking water needs of citizens and cattle, after which water will be released to irrigate standing crops.

Pawar said that rabi crop in parts of western Maharashtra, Marathwada and Vidarbha had been affected by low rainfall and non-availability of water. "The state has urged the Centre to send a team to assess the damage. A similar team visited the state after the kharif season," he said.

Pawar said that the government was taking seriously the proposal to supply water for agriculture only through drip irrigation, which would restrict water wastage. He said that subsidy schemes could be worked out for effective implementation of drip irrigation schemes, wherein the central and state governments could bear part of the cost along with the farmer concerned.

Cyprus has largest number of big dams in Europe

Published on January 20, 2013

CYPRUS now has more large dams than any other country in Europe, the Minister of Agriculture Sophocles Aletraris said yesterday.

In his address at the inauguration of Solea dam, in Nicosia district, Aletraris said that Cyprus has 56 large dams listed in the International Commission on Large Dams (ICOLD). With the completion of Solea dam this has increased to 57.

He also said that the total storage capacity of reservoirs in Cyprus stands at approximately 336 million cubic metres, compared to six million cubic metres in 1960.

“This is really impressive if compared with other countries of the same size and level of development as Cyprus,” he added.

He said current water supplies in the reservoirs amounted to 250 million cubic metres or 86 per cent of their total capacity.

“The completion of Solea dam is expected to strengthen significantly the water balance of the region, contributing to the management of water resources,” he said, adding that “the goal of the Solea dam is to meet the irrigation needs of the area.”

Speaking during the inauguration ceremony, President Demetris Christofias said that Cyprus is now fully independent of rainfall and weather conditions, as a result of proper planning and implementation of water supply infrastructure.

“The implementation of desalination plants means that the people, the economy and tourism will not have to face in the future water cuts or water shortage,” Christofias said, as he inaugurated the dam.

<http://paper.hindustantimes.com/epaper/showarticle.aspx?issue=8633201301190000000001001&page=4&article=6ac2df5b-bc4a-4689-869e-e370844cf7b9&key=5p%2FUPzNh91hDMzNUwDbbRw%3D%3D&feed=rss>

Construction of big dams will ruin us: Nobel laureate 1

NATURE Byrne visits Sardar Sarovar Project and Indira Sagar Project-affected areas

BARWANI: Nobel laureate Dr John Byrne on Friday said there are sufficient sources to fulfill the need of energy for the future, hence, construction of big dams will damage human beings in many ways.

Byrne along with 10 research scholars from USA, South Korea, Taiwan and Argentina visited the Sardar Sarovar Project (SSP) and Indira Sagar Project (ISP) affected areas of Barwani. He told mediapersons that construction of big dams was stopped in USA due to various environmental problems and losses and dams are being broken to maintain the natural flow of the rivers.

“We are having sufficient energy sources to fulfill the need of future,” he said adding that stopping the natural flow of the river and constructing the canals parallel to it is absolutely ridiculous.

The team led by Dr Byrne is visiting few places in India to prepare a report on environmental changes and renewable energy.

He added, “In place of ruining the eco-system by constructing big dams we should prefer renewable energy sources like solar, wind, bio-mass etc.”

Byrne and his team visited Sardar Sarovar Project affected village Chhota Barda and Rajghat and ISP affected village Mandil and met fishermen and affected people who narrated them about the problems related to submergence, environment, rehabilitation, and change in climate and eco system due to construction of dams.

He also paid tribute to father of the nation Mahatma Gandhi by visiting to his memorial at Rajghat, situated on the bank of river Narmada, near Barwani.

On Friday, the team visited some SSP-affected villages of Dhar district and Chimalkhedhi in Nandurbar district of Maharashtra. The team was accompanied by Narmada

I (Emmanuel) added a comment on the site:

To present John Byrne as a "Nobel Laureate" is fraudulent journalim.

Byrne is a contributing member of the Working group 3 of IPCC

IPCC is a Nobel Laureate.

But the addition of these two truths does not make Byrne a Nobel Laureate !

Le grand barrage d'Ourjis bientôt opérationnel Hocine Necib en visite à Oum El Bouaghi

19/01/2013

http://www.vitamedz.com/le-grand-barrage-d-ourjis-bientot-operationnel/Articles_18300_1003300_4_1.html

L'ouvrage, d'une capacité de 65 millions de m³, permettra d'alimenter en eau potable les habitants des cinq plus importantes villes de la wilaya. Le projet de réalisation le gigantesque barrage d'Ourjis, dans la commune d'Aïn Fakroun, a été la principale halte du ministre des ressources en eau, Hocine Necib, lors de sa visite d'inspection effectuée, jeudi dernier, dans la wilaya d'Oum El Bouaghi. Cet ouvrage dont il ne reste que l'installation des stations de pompage, pour le rendre bientôt opérationnel, est d'une importance capitale pour toute la région qui accuse un important déficit en matière de ressources hydriques. Ce barrage qui sera alimenté à partir de celui de Beni Haroun, dans la wilaya de [Mila](#) a nécessité pour sa réalisation une enveloppe de 7,8 milliards de dinars. Grâce à une capacité de 65 millions de mètres cubes, il alimentera cinq les villes de Aïn M'lila, Aïn Kercha, Aïn Fakroun, [Oum El Bouaghi](#) et Aïn Beïda. D'autre part, il facilitera l'irrigation de 18 000 ha de terres agricoles de la plaine de Chemmora, dans la wilaya de Batna. Le ministre qui a inspecté les travaux de la station d'épuration des eaux usées à Aïn Beïda, n'a pas apprécié le grand retard accusé par les travaux. Un délai a été donné à l'entreprise en charge du projet. Cette station située à Salf El Beïda, à 4 km de la ville des Haracta et qui a bénéficié de 265 millions de dinars est appelée, outre la protection des nappes phréatiques contre la pollution, à irriguer 200 hectares. Finalement, le ministre Hocine Necib a inspecté le périmètre d'irrigation dans la commune de Ksar Sbihi, située au nord est du chef-lieu de wilaya, un périmètre qui atteindra plus de 3 000 ha dans un proche avenir. Notons que lors de la même visite, le ministre des ressources en eau avait donné le coup d'envoi du projet de réalisation d'une retenue collinaire dans la commune de Ouled Hamla, commune située à l'ouest de Aïn M'lila. Cette digue sera alimentée à partir de l'Oued Drimel. Dans cette partie ouest de la wilaya, une station d'épuration des eaux usées résoudra le problème de pollution des nappes phréatiques de la région de Aïn M'lila.

<http://science.kqed.org/quest/audio/climate-threat-to-dams-overlooked-by-regulators/>

Threat to Dams Overlooked by Regulators

Audio Report on Jan 11, 2013 by Molly Samuel from KQED Science
Topics: Climate, Environment, News, Radio

There are more than 130 hydropower projects in California. They take advantage of steep terrain and gushing mountain rivers to churn out about fourteen percent of California's electricity.

It's a delicate balance, dependent on heavy snow in the winter, and heavy runoff in the spring as the snow melts. But climate change threatens to throw that balance out of whack, a problem that federal regulators have chosen to ignore.

A High-Stakes Game

New Bullards Bar Dam stretches across a steep rocky canyon in the Sierra Nevada foothills, about fifty miles northeast of Sacramento.

It's the fifth-highest dam in North America, towering more than sixty stories over the North Yuba River.

"I get to run around to all these glorious sites, and work on a multitude of issues," says Geoff Rabone. He works for the Yuba County Water Agency, which owns this and other smaller dams, plus a network of reservoirs, water diversion tunnels and hydroelectric facilities.

Standing on top of the spillway, we can see vultures circling below us.

Rabone manages relicensing for the water agency. Every few decades, hydropower projects have to get a new license from the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, or FERC. If you think going to the DMV is bad, be glad you're not a dam. Applying for a new hydropower license takes years and costs millions of dollars. It seems like everything gets considered, from how the dams affect water supply, to endangered species, to whitewater sports.

"We have 44 different studies going on right now," Rabone tells me.

In the end, the new license will dictate how much electricity the project generates, and how much water it releases $\frac{1}{2}$ and when $\frac{1}{2}$ for the next thirty-to-fifty years. That's why there are so many studies, and why FERC relicensing is so important to water agencies, power companies and environmental groups, among others.

But there's one looming issue that Rabone doesn't have to wrangle any studies for: climate change. FERC doesn't require those.

Climate Change and the "New Normal"

"It's an approach akin to the cliché of putting their heads in the sand," says Steve Rothert, the California director for the environmental organization American Rivers. Rothert says he has asked FERC to include climate change in the relicensing process, but they've turned him down.

Climate change projections for the Sierra Nevada vary. The region may get wetter; it may get drier. But scientists agree that it will get warmer, dramatically affecting the snow where most of the region's water comes from $\frac{1}{2}$ and not just in the distant future. There's evidence that we're already seeing effects of climate change in the Sierra.

"And yet the power companies and the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission refuse to consider how climate change will affect these dams and these rivers for the next 50 years," says Rothert.

Josh Viers, an ecologist at The University of California in Davis, is similarly perplexed. He argues that FERC's decision to depend only on historic weather and water records doesn't make sense anymore, especially for licenses that won't expire for decades. "Most of the projections for California in particular and these are multiple scientists using different models and different assumptions all converge on the same idea," explains Viers. "The climate 35 years from now is not likely to be what we see today."

One recent study suggests the emergence of a new normal within the next few decades, one in which eight-in-ten winters in the western U.S. will see snow accumulation below what we now consider normal.

Viers says the way California manages water will have to change. Right now, the snowpack itself serves as a reservoir. If it melts earlier, or if more precipitation falls as rain, our man-made reservoirs may have to spill the extra runoff, which could mean more floods in the winter, and more water shortages in the summer.

"We have a lot at stake," says Viers. "So it seems it would be in the public's best interest if in fact FERC were looking out for the public."

In fact, the strategic planner for one Sierra utility says, when his agency included an entire section on climate effects in its relicensing application, FERC didn't want it.

Why Not Consider Climate?

FERC officials acknowledge that climate change will have an impact on hydropower, but say the climate models scientists have developed just aren't specific enough to project local impacts.

"There are not really any models yet that are granular enough that we would feel comfortable basing a decision on the impact of climate change on an individual facility," FERC commissioner John Norris told me.

FERC has also said that the focus of relicensing studies is on how hydropower operations affect resources, not how other things in this case, climate change affect them. Rothert of American Rivers says that's a red herring, though; the studies he's asked for would concern how hydropower projects affect resources in a changed climate.

If federal regulators are "whistling in the dark," Rabone from the Yuba County Water Agency says climate change is very much on his mind.

"It's going to be very interesting to see what happens, if climate change turns out the way it's theorized to work out," he says.

If it does, the job of water managers balancing the needs of fish, farmers and power plants will only get more complicated as the climate changes, whether or not regulators are paying attention.

[http://www.thefinancialdaily.com/NewsSearchResult/NewsSearchDetail.aspx?
NewsID=156949](http://www.thefinancialdaily.com/NewsSearchResult/NewsSearchDetail.aspx?NewsID=156949)

Economy growth rate lowest due to energy crisis: FCCI President

FAISALABAD: Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FCCI) President Mian Zahid Aslam said on Tuesday that economy growth rate in Pakistan had become lowest due to severe energy crisis and the government should take immediate remedial measure to resolve this issue on war-footing basis. Addressing the meeting of Officers of Specialized Training, Trade and Commerce Group of Pakistan Institute of Trade and Development, Islamabad, at FCCI Complex here, he said that other countries in the region were progressing while GDP growth of Pakistan had been lowest in the region. He said that "We are potentially rich in natural resources and enumerated as the 2nd largest mines in Pakistan, 4th largest producers of cotton, rice and milk, 3rd largest reserves for coal and many other potentials but lacking in planning and governance."

He said that the recent severe electricity and gas load-shedding had crippled the industry particularly the textile industries in Faisalabad which were mostly export-oriented.

He said that true solution of this problem lies with cheap hydel electricity generation through construction of large dams to avoid costly option of thermal generation electricity.

Chaudhary Muhammad Boota Vice President FCCI, Rehan Ashfaq Sheikh, Chaudhary Muhammad Nawaz, Muhammad Asif Aslam and others also spoke on the occasion. APP
