

Media Release

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Appeals halt important Axpo hydrogen project

Project planning for a hydrogen production facility at the Eglisau-Glattfelden hydropower plant has come to a halt owing to appeals filed by private citizens. The plant for the production of green hydrogen would have enabled yearly savings of 1.5 million litres of diesel fuel in the road transport sector. Despite this setback, Axpo will continue to advance its hydrogen plans in Switzerland.

After informing [on the project](#) in April 2021, Axpo is now forced to halt project planning immediately. Appeals were filed against the town of Glattfelden and the Building Department of the Canton of Zurich. Three private citizens were successful with their appeals to the Appeals Court against the construction of a hydrogen production facility at the projected site.

"We are very sorry that we will not be able to contribute more to decarbonisation in Switzerland. In order for us to move forward in Switzerland, everyone must be willing to make compromises," says Guy Bühler, Head Hydrogen at Axpo.

The plant would have saved over 1.5 million litres of diesel fuel

Green hydrogen belongs to the most important climate-friendly energy sources, especially in industry and the mobility sector. It is a key component of the decarbonisation strategies of Switzerland and many EU countries. As storage medium for renewable energies (power-to-gas), hydrogen is an important pillar of the energy transition.

Axpo wants to actively advance the development of the hydrogen eco-system in Switzerland as a producer of green hydrogen and invest in projects accordingly. The 2.5-megawatt hydrogen production facility at the Eglisau-Glattfelden hydropower plant would have produced about 350 tonnes of green hydrogen and saved over 1.5 million litres of diesel fuel in the road transport sector. With growing demand, plant capacity could have been expanded to 5 megawatts. Despite the project halt, Axpo will hold to its plans to expand green hydrogen and realise other projects in Switzerland.

Regulatory adaptations urgently needed

An existing power plant building, which is located outside the current building zone, would have had to be replaced for the planned hydrogen production facility. As a result, Axpo applied for an exemption permit for plant construction based on Art. 24 of the Spatial Planning Act, which was approved by the authorities. Among other criteria such permits are granted subject to site-dependency and in consideration of a positive balance of interests. The Appeals Court of the Canton of Zurich has now reached a different decision. This strict interpretation of the law although the facility is climate-friendly facility and in accordance with the Energy Strategy 2050 will impede decarbonisation.

The example of Eglisau-Glattfelden demonstrates that many projects to the benefit of decarbonisation and the energy transition are dependent on exemption permits and their realisation requires a willingness to compromise on the part of companies, authorities and local residents.

Framework conditions to enable the realisation of forward-looking projects and urgently needed investments in the energy transition must be created. Lawmakers have a responsibility here.

About Axpo:

Axpo is driven by a single purpose – to enable a sustainable future through innovative energy solutions. Axpo is Switzerland's largest producer of renewable energy and an international leader in energy trading and the marketing of solar and wind power. Axpo combines the experience and expertise of more than 5,000 employees who are driven by a passion for innovation, collaboration and impactful change. Using cutting-edge technologies, Axpo innovates to meet the evolving needs of its customers in over 30 countries across Europe, North America and Asia.

Additional information

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