

# Press release

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## Strengthening security of supply: Axpo is giving a clear Yes to the new electricity law, assessing the potential of operating Beznau for longer, and is prepared to construct a reserve power plant

**Switzerland needs more electricity to achieve its climate goals. In order for the expansion of renewable energies to become a reality, we need a clear Yes to the draft of the new electricity law on 9 June. To further strengthen security of supply, Axpo has decided to clarify the technical feasibility of operating the Beznau nuclear power plant beyond 60 years. Axpo has also responded to the federal government's tender (which ends today) and submitted a project for a reserve power plant for emergencies.**

Switzerland needs more electricity to achieve its climate goals. By 2050, Switzerland will face a shortage of over 50 terawatt hours (TWh). This is significantly more than all the hydropower produced today and corresponds to 80% of current electricity consumption. This makes a rapid and significant increase in renewable energies essential. The aim is to achieve a suitable mix of hydropower, solar, wind and other technologies such as biomass.

In order for this expansion to become a reality, we need a clear Yes to the draft of the new electricity law on 9 June. This bill promotes the expansion of domestic renewable energy sources (including the implementation of 16 hydropower projects) to strengthen Switzerland's electricity supply, especially in winter.

As the largest producer of renewable energy and the largest electricity producer in Switzerland, climate-friendly energy supply is a big priority for Axpo. The expansion of renewable energies in Switzerland and Europe is a pillar of the company strategy. We already install over 700 PV systems annually through our subsidiary CKW.

Given the potentially dramatic effects of large-scale and prolonged power outages, ensuring the security of supply is of paramount importance. To further strengthen Switzerland's security of supply, Axpo has also decided to clarify the technical feasibility of operating the Beznau nuclear power plant beyond 60 years. In addition, Axpo has responded to the federal government's tender and submitted a project for a reserve power plant for emergencies.

### **Beznau nuclear power plant: Axpo clarifies the technical feasibility of operating beyond 60 years**

There are no service life restrictions for nuclear power plants in Switzerland – they may be operated as long as it remains safe to do so. Axpo is still planning to operate the Beznau nuclear power plant for 60 years, but is now assessing the fundamental feasibility of operating it beyond this scope. The aspect of safety is the top priority and non-negotiable.

The Beznau nuclear power plant meets the highest safety standards. Since their commissioning, Axpo has invested over CHF 2.5 billion into retrofitting and modernising the two power plant blocks. Whether operation beyond the previously intended 60 years is fundamentally feasible depends on several factors, which are currently being assessed by Axpo in a preliminary project. These include the integrity of central components (such as reactor pressure vessels) and the availability of personnel, suppliers and fuel. Axpo has begun the necessary comprehensive investigation. The work for this preliminary project is expected to take roughly one year.

The Beznau nuclear power plant produces around 6 terawatt hours of electricity per year in a safe and climate-friendly manner, corresponding to the consumption of 1.3 million four-person households. Nuclear power is particularly important for security of supply as it can be produced in winter, during which time almost half of the electricity produced in Switzerland comes from nuclear power.

### **For emergency preparedness: Axpo is ready to build a reserve power plant**

The Swiss Federal Office of Energy (SFOE) launched a tender in July 2023 for reserve power plants after 2026 as an emergency preparedness measure and to secure the electricity supply in shortage situations. Axpo decided to respond to the federal government's tender (which ends today) and has submitted a project to the SFOE for a gas turbine power plant that could cover the electricity consumption of hundred thousand households in a shortage situation. It was developed in close cooperation with local partners and cantonal authorities and is intended to be implemented in Auhafen in Muttenz, Basel-Landschaft.

In principle, Axpo wishes to operate the power plant in a CO<sub>2</sub>-neutral manner using eMethanol. Due to the still-limited availability of eMethanol, the plant would run on fossil fuels during the initial phase. Ideally, to ensure that the reserve power plant is never used, the expansion of renewable energy in Switzerland must be accelerated. In addition to alpine PV systems, wind farms in particular have a lot of potential when it comes to winter supply. Thanks to the low costs of wind power, this technology is also attractive for consumers in terms of electricity prices.

### **About Axpo**

Axpo's ambition is to provide a sustainable future through innovative energy solutions. Axpo is Switzerland's largest producer of renewable energy and an international pioneer in energy trading and the marketing of solar and wind power. The company has more than 6700 employees who combine experience and expertise with a passion for innovation and the shared search for ever-better solutions. Axpo relies on innovative technologies to meet the ever-changing needs of its customers in over 30 countries in Europe, North America and Asia.



### **Additional information**

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