



Review of the 2024 water policy

May 13, 2025 | Andri Bryner

Topics: Drinking Water | Wastewater | Biodiversity | Ecosystems | Pollutants | Water & Development | Society | Climate Change & Energy

The year 2024 was very warm and very wet, especially in early summer. This led to a welcome replenishment of groundwater reservoirs and record hydropower production, but also to severe flooding. In Bern, the focus was on the further expansion of hydropower and the pollution of water resources by pesticides and the "eternal chemicals" PFAS.

For the eighth time in a row, Aqua&Gas magazine has published an overview of political events and debates on the topic of water and water bodies from the previous year, i.e. 2024. The [online version](#) of the article also contains user-friendly direct links to the initiatives, reports and judgements.

Two topics were at the top of the agenda both in the cantons and in parliament in Bern: the further expansion of hydropower and the pollution of water resources by potentially harmful substances. In both cases, there is a struggle between national supply and protection aspects - in the case of hydropower between kilowatt hours and landscape and water protection, and in the case of substance pollution between agricultural production and precautions for human and environmental health. A report by the Swiss Federal Audit Office on the latter is interesting. The report states that the polluter pays principle is not applied consistently enough and that the public sector is almost always responsible for remediation. Better monitoring structures for water, soil and air are also called for.

The events surrounding the floods in Valais in June (pictured above) led to a special cantonal session in October. Shortly before the floods, the State Council had cancelled the generational project for the third Rhone correction with planned costs of over CHF 3.5 billion. Local projects along the Rhone that were actually prioritised have also been put on the back burner. These include improvements to flood protection near Sierre, where the aluminium industry, among others, was flooded.

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ührt zum willkommenen Auffüllen der Grundwasserspeicher, aber auch zu schweren Unwettern. In Bern stehen wasserpolitisch der weitere Ausbau der Wasserkraft im Fokus sowie die Belastung der Wasserressourcen durch Pestizide und die «Ewigkeitschemikalien» PFAS. Bei beiden Themen wird zwischen Landesversorgung und Schutzaspekten gerungen – bei der Wasserkraft zwischen Kilowattstunden und Landschafts-, beziehungsweise Gewässerschutz, bei den stofflichen Belastungen zwischen der landwirtschaftlichen Produktion und der Vorsorge für die Gesundheit von Mensch und Umwelt.' (652 chars) serialnumber => protected'2235-5197' (9 chars) doi => protected" (0 chars) uid => protected34611 (integer) _localizedUid => protected34611 (integer)modified _languageUid => protectedNULL _versionedUid => protected34611 (integer)modified pid => protected124 (integer) Bryner, A.; Fischer, M.; Vollenweider, S. (2025) Wasserpolitischer Jahresrückblick 2024, *Aqua & Gas*, 105(5), 52-60, [Institutional Repository](#)

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