



# Monrovia electricity policy

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Liberia has one of the lowest electricity access rates in the world. At the time of compact development, less than five percent of Liberia's population had access to electricity, making it one of the least electrified countries in the world. At the time of compact signing in 2016, 84 percent of Liberians were living on less than \$1.25/day and on-grid electricity was one of the largest operating expenses for Liberian businesses selling at over \$0.50 per kWh.

The Mt. Coffee Hydropower Plant—the country's single largest source of power and most of Liberia's transmission and distribution network—was decimated during Liberia's civil war. Originally constructed in the 1960s a time when Liberia's economy was strong and growing, Mt. Coffee was emblematic of the country's progress and remained symbolically connected to the aspirations of the Liberian people. Its destruction left the country in near darkness.

Recognizing the critical importance of the hydropower plant, MCC and the Government of Liberia worked with other stakeholders to restore this national asset that can now produce 88 megawatts of power—more than doubling the power generation capacity of the entire country. Today, because of Mt. Coffee, 85,000 households now have access to the electricity grid—more than double what it was at the beginning of the compact.

The Mt. Coffee Hydropower Plant is fueled by water flowing from the St. Paul River, making it a clean, sustainable, renewable power source as opposed to diesel generators that produce exhaust with more than 40 toxic air contaminants including nitrogen oxide—the single most destructive ozone-depleting emission.

MCC also worked with the other donors to minimize disruptions to livelihoods when the dam was refilled. New roads, bridges, and wells were built, and studies were conducted to ensure considerations such as sustainable fishing practices were understood. A unique fish identification guide and instructions on how to protect fish and prawns in and around the dam were also produced.

The investment brings reliable, more affordable electricity to the capitol city of Monrovia—benefiting homes and business owners—and lighting the way toward a brighter future for Liberians.

The compact also supported a management services contract for the utility, new customer connections, improved customer service, and staff capacity. A rehabilitated Liberia Electricity Company (LEC) customer service center was completed in 2020. It is now a safer building that includes a modern call center, access for people with disabilities, and customer restrooms. Now that the center is open to customers, the improvements are clear.

“The new service center is very beautiful. Our waiting time is now much shorter than before. LEC can



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now address our problems much faster," remarked one customer who has been an LEC client since 2019.

Today there are three times as many homes and businesses connected to the grid than at the start of compact implementation. And with a 30 percent decrease in electricity costs, business owners can expand their services, reduce their dependence on generators, and increase their incomes.

The destruction of the Mt. Coffee dam also resulted in the failure of a vital water pipeline to Monrovia's water treatment plant. The loss of the pipeline imperiled the availability, safety, and quantity of the drinking water for 1.1 million people. The compact funded construction of a larger pipeline that draws water from the Mt. Coffee reservoir away from salt-infused sources and delivers it using gravity flow, saving an estimated \$780,000 annually in electricity costs.

The compact also supported health initiatives within communities along the pipeline's path. Through the Liberian Red Cross Society, communities received MCC-funded training on HIV/AIDS and COVID-19 awareness, prevention, testing, and counseling services. Broken hand pumps for water collection have also been replaced, new water wells and hand pumps installed, and community water management committees have been trained to maintain the new equipment—all helping improve water quality for communities.

With investments in management, systems and equipment, increased skills for workers, and increased clean power generation—MCC's investment in Liberia's energy sector established a foundation on which the Government of Liberia, private sector investors, and regional partners can continue building toward economic prosperity. Access to electricity and water will change lives, and the compact will encourage economic development and provide Liberians with the opportunity to create a brighter future.

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