

The draft law on renewable energy sources in Serbia envisages the continuation of subsidizing the construction of small hydropower plants, to the detriment of all citizens and their rivers, and the will of the citizens has been ignored, as the world organization WWF Adria announced.

“Given that all relevant institutions, as well as Prime Minister Ana Brnabic, are familiar with all evidence of economic unjustification of construction and subsidies of small hydropower plants, as well as their harmfulness to the environment, biodiversity and local communities, we consider unacceptable the Ministry’s decision to continue financing these harmful projects with citizens’ money, regardless of whether they are small hydroelectric or derivation small hydroelectric power plants “, warned the WWF representative Adrija Natasa Milivojevic.

As it was pointed out, the ministry continued “with the practice of non-transparent decision-making on topics important for the quality of life of citizens”, and a very short deadline was provided for submitting comments on the draft law, “as before in January, when they gave only a week days to comment on the starting points for the draft of the same law “.

WWF Adria, which submitted comments on the document to the Ministry of Mining and Energy, wonders what the goal of such public hearings is when citizens, civil society organizations and all other stakeholders are given less than 30 days. It was specified that the draft law was available on the official website of the ministry only on the last day for submitting comments, ie on February 9.

“Even when that information was released, it could only be found in the archives of the ministry’s official website,” the WWF said, noting that in response to comments sent in early January, the ministry confirmed that hydropower projects were in the public interest. and how they will continue with subsidies for the construction of small hydroelectric power plants in Pribran, and thus, it is added, they have ignored all warnings and requests of citizens, but also civil society organizations.

The WWF believes that in the coming period it is necessary to turn to new technologies and energy production from other renewable sources, as well as increase energy efficiency to mitigate climate change. It is necessary to integrally consider which renewable energy sources have a harmful impact on nature and encourage only those who do not destroy it, unlike hydroelectric power plants. Also, hydropower plants are an outdated technology that will require increasing investment over time, and the damage they have to people and the environment is unjustifiably great, the WWF said. They indicated that this would be further exacerbated by climate change and its impact on aquatic ecosystems and resources, which are already under enormous pressure. They also reminded that Serbia, along with all other

countries in the Danube basin, has committed itself to implementing legislation on water, climate and the environment within the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River. One of the adopted documents is the “Guiding Principles on Sustainable Development of Hydropower in the Danube Basin”, which states that the use of hydropower must respect the principles of sustainability, taking into account the environment, social and economic factors in a balanced way, WWF said. In addition, the document states that it is necessary to establish measures to mitigate the negative impacts of hydropower plants. According to WWF Adei representative Duska Dimovic, although Serbia needs to establish a framework for investing in renewable energy production, it would be desirable to wait for the adoption of this law until the changes that are expected in EU legislation are considered soon, as after its adoption no changes would be required.

It was emphasized that the experiences from Europe, but also from Serbia, show that the development of the energy sector must include clear guidelines on environmental protection, especially when we are faced with the uncertainty brought by the climate crisis. Therefore, WWF welcomes the earlier consideration of the organization’s comments to include environmental inspections in future monitoring of law enforcement, in addition to energy inspection, to ensure that the implementation of renewable energy laws is not to the detriment of nature laws.

“We urge the ministry to adopt our and other civil society organizations’ proposals, consider the evidence submitted to them, and ultimately propose a law that will prepare society as a whole for the challenges we will face in the coming years,” the WWF said.

Source: novimagazin.rs