

The municipalities of Bor and Uzice have decided to ban the construction of small hydropower plants (SHPP), thus joining Kraljevo, Pirot, Paracin and Dimitrovgrad, a group of local authorities in Serbia that have already banned or intend to ban the construction of these facilities, due to damages to the environment.

Mass protests have been organized in recent months against the construction of small hydropower plants in Serbia, some of which led to blockades of construction sites and even physical altercations. Earlier this week, an investor has pulled out of the project for the construction of 350 kW SHPP Topli Dol 1 on the Rakitska river within the Stara Planina protected area. Last October, Serbian Minister of Environment Goran Trivan said that the amendments to the law on protection of nature will ban the construction of small hydropower plants in protected areas, but those already built in such areas will not be demolished. He stressed that SHPPs of the derivation type are harmful, especially considering the way some of them were built, adding that the Ministry's position has always been that this type of SHPPs cannot be built in protected areas. The Ministry of Energy and the Ministry of Environmental Protection offer to anyone who might have obtained a permit for construction in protected areas to exchange those locations for others outside protected areas.