

Olympics will make water scarcity worse

The 2022 Winter Olympics in Beijing threaten to seriously exacerbate water shortages in the area, where the available water per person is already only about 3% of the world's average (see also *Nature* **524**, 278–279; 2015).

The Winter Olympics will take place in February, when monthly precipitation in Beijing is less than 6 millimetres, so the games will need to rely exclusively on artificial snow (see go.nature.com/bkxbo8). This will entail pumping massive volumes of water out of reservoirs and rivers, further reducing the local population's water supply, and using huge amounts of energy to cool this water to make ice crystals that can be ejected. For example, producing artificial snow for winter sports in Beijing in 2010 used the annual equivalent of the water and electricity consumed by 8,300 and 5,400 households, respectively (see go.nature.com/ysdpbd; in Chinese).

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