In 2015, U.S. fossil-fueled thermoelectric power accounted for 26% of the total 281 billion gallons of water used annually in the coal industry. Thermoelectric power plants with large volumes of fresh water, but less than three percent, is actually consumed. Most of the water is returned to its source.

Between 2012 and 2014, 4.54 billion gallons of water was used annually in the oil and gas production industry. U.S. oil and gas operations also generated an estimated 890 billion gallons of “produced water” annually.

NETL applies its research and program management capabilities to solve water problems associated with coal-based power generation, oil and gas development, carbon capture and storage, and other issues related to fossil energy extraction and use.

Since 2000, NETL has funded more than 150 water-energy projects, many of which resulted in commercial technologies like cooling tower recovery processes and new ways to treat and reuse produced water.