



AS IT IS

## Report: Climate Change Threatens Winter Olympics, Snow Sports

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Experts warn that climate change is threatening the Winter Olympics and the future of snow sports.

Warmer weather is also making conditions much more dangerous for athletes and others. The warning came in a report published a week before the 2022 Winter Games in Beijing begin on February 4.

The Games will be the first Winter Olympics to use almost 100 percent **artificial** snow. More than 400 snow making machines are being used to cover the ski area.

The report said that making artificial snow uses a lot of energy, water and chemicals. The researchers said the artificial snow also creates what many competitors call unpredictable and dangerous conditions. The report came from the Sport Ecology Group at Loughborough University in England and the Protect Our Winters environment group based in Boulder, Colorado.

The Beijing organizing committee has released its own report. It said the Games' "smart snowmaking system" could use 20 percent less water than traditional methods.

The organizers said the Games will not put pressure on local water supplies. Instead, they said melted mountain water will be used along with rainfall collected during the summer.

The research noted that climate change reduces the amount of natural snow fall in many areas of the world. There is also less water available to create artificial snow, putting the entire snow sport industry at risk. Competitors often must deal with unpredictable snow seasons, the research said.

Climate change is also reducing the number of places that can **host** the Winter Games.

"The risk is clear: man-made warming is threatening the long-term future of winter sports," the report said.

There have been 21 hosts of the Winter Olympics since the 1924 Games at the French resort of Chamonix. Researchers estimated that, by 2050, only 10 will have the "climate **suitability**" and natural snowfall levels to host the event.

Chamonix is now rated "high risk" along with places in Norway, France and Austria. Vancouver in Canada, Sochi in Russia, and Squaw Valley in the United States are considered "**unreliable**."

I'm Dan Novak.

*Reuters reported this story. Dan Novak adapted it for VOA Learning English.*

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## Words in This Story

**artificial** — *adj.* not natural; created or manufactured by people

**host** — *n.* an organization, group or country that holds an event and provides all of the things needed to make the event safe and enjoyable

**suitable** — *adj.* having the qualities that are right or needed for some purpose

**unreliable** — *adj.* not able to be depended upon; not likely to provide what is needed or promised

