



SIERRA
CLUB
BC

Sierra Report

ONE EARTH. ONE CHANCE.

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SITE C DAM: WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW



DON HOFFMAN

Site C Mega-Dam: Neither “Clean” nor “Renewable”

Despite widespread opposition from farmers, ranchers, conservationists and First Nations, Site C is back on the table.

In April 2010, the B.C. government announced that it will proceed with the highly controversial Site C dam mega-project in the Peace River Valley. The \$8 billion hydro project has been pushed as a “clean energy” project, but, in fact, the construction of the dam and the decay of the flooded boreal forest would increase annual greenhouse gas emissions in British Columbia by almost 150,000 tonnes – equivalent to putting another 27,000 cars on the road each year.

The proposed Site C dam would destroy carbon-sequestering wetlands that support large migratory bird flocks. Farms and ranches passed down for generations would be forever lost. Sensitive species

such as wolverines, caribou and grizzly bears would lose up to 55 per cent of their regional habitat when Site C is added to other industrial activity in the Peace.

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Why is taxpayer money and citizens’ time being wasted on repeatedly studying the same destructive project?

And “renewable”? The impact of construction, flooding and habitat loss pales in comparison with the large-scale destruction that would be powered by the electricity generated by Site C (see article on p. 3).

No means no. Site C was already rejected twice in the 1980s, after massive public opposition and detailed environmental reviews by the B.C. Utilities Commission. But in 2010, the B.C. government took away the B.C. Utilities Commission’s independent oversight of Site C. Why is

April 4 was the close of the first public comment period for British Columbians to voice their concerns about the proposed Site C mega-dam. Working together with LeadNow, Sierra supporters sent more than 3,400 comments about BC Hydro’s inadequate Environmental Impact Statement to the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency.

VOICES from the Peace



TREATY8.BC.CA

LIZ LOGAN, TRIBAL CHIEF OF TREATY 8 TRIBAL ASSOCIATION

"Four First Nations in north-eastern B.C. are very concerned about what the proposed Site C dam would mean to their people and their stories and legends. The stories and legends are attached to the land. If there is no place for people to go to tell their children about the things they did as children, or their parents did as children, how can we continue with our traditions and culture?"



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KEN AND ARLENE BOON, THIRD-GENERATION FARMERS IN THE PEACE VALLEY

"If the Site C dam goes ahead, we will lose our land – we would basically be forced off. There's 83 kms of valley, just in the Peace River, that's going to be flooded, plus the other side valleys. Most of it's river bottom farmland, so there's a lot of farmland affected, and a handful of other farm and ranch homes that will be lost. BC Hydro will pass this debt onto our grandchildren through deferral accounting as they've done before. They can't even demonstrate that they need the power, and they want to flood the only Class 1 farmland north of Quesnel!"



TREATY8.BC.CA

CHIEF ROLAND WILLSON OF WEST MOBERLY FIRST NATIONS

"Site C dam is going to be a catastrophe for B.C. It's going to be a continuation of existing impacts of the Williston Reservoir and the Peace Canyon Reservoir. The fish in the Williston Reservoir have been contaminated with mercury. We did a study this summer and took a look at a tributary that is 60 kms away. We took samples of bull trout and Dolly Varden trout. We found that samples were heavily laden with mercury. We were quite surprised because BC Hydro has been telling us that the mercury levels are diminishing, but they are not – they are increasing in certain areas."



LEIGH SUMMERS

LEIGH SUMMERS – THIRD GENERATION RANCHER IN THE PEACE RIVER VALLEY

"I have a lot of issues with Site C. The dam isn't needed. We don't need the power. BC Hydro should be diversifying, not building more of the same. It would be ludicrous to flood this valley. If they go ahead it's going to be an environmental disaster. The valley will no longer exist. The focus for people here – it's really a heritage issue. If Site C is built, that heritage will be lost and there will be no Peace River left in B.C. When Gordon Campbell came to announce Site C in 2010, I went to the meeting to talk to him. I wanted to tell him why so many people don't support Site C. The meeting was in a public building and it was about a very important issue that affects all of us. But I was not allowed into the meeting. I was respectful but determined to speak my mind. I ended up being arrested that day, just as my father had been many years earlier – also because of dams in the Peace."



GRAHAM OSBORNE

Treaty 8 organizes an annual July "Paddle for the Peace".

SITE C DAM

Billions of Reasons Not to Build Site C

If the Site C dam is built, as proposed by B.C. Hydro, a great deal will be lost. First, there is the loss of the \$8 billion that every taxpayer in British Columbia would be forced to part with in order to build the most expensive 1,100 megawatt mega-dam in world history.

Imagine what a government committed to wise environmental stewardship could do with \$8 billion dollars. Imagine what you could do with your share of \$8 billion.

Beyond the financial impact on all British Columbians, there are many other reasons why Site C is the wrong idea at the wrong time in the wrong place.

B.C. Hydro has told us that we need to build Site C in order to meet the growing demand for electricity across the province.

More recently, however, it has become clear that the primary reason behind the push to build Site C is to power an anticipated boom in fracked natural gas and the liquefied natural gas (LNG) industry. In fact, 100% of Site C's power could be used to fire just

one of five prospective LNG plants. And to be even more clear – that would constitute an enormous taxpayer subsidy to fossil fuel companies. Finally, the LNG that might be produced by Site C electricity is intended for foreign markets, not for you and your neighbours.

At a time when more and more people are waking up to the gathering storm of climate change, Site C would drive the LNG industry which, in turn, would drive greenhouse gas emissions. Moreover, Site C would flood more than 2,975 hectares of Class 1 to Class 3 agricultural land (the only prime agricultural land north of Quesnel) at a time when food security is ever more critical against the backdrop of climate change impacts.

We are happy to be working closely with Yellowstone to Yukon Conservation Initiative and Peace Valley Environment Association to draw public attention to the many threats and high cost of the proposed Site C dam.

SIERRA CLUB BC'S EDUCATION TEAM TURNS 15!

Deliciously cute cupcakes from Cake My Day sweetened the Education Team's 15th birthday celebrations on April 20, which also featured kids'



sampling games and activities, an unexpected eccentric musician, and glorious sunshine.

We have seen remarkable innovation over the course of the Education Program. School-yard gardens started by students. Social

justice clubs made up of 13-year-olds. Bike rallies organized. Smiles and laughter as many hands release salmon into the river after watching them hatch in their classroom. We have worked within schools, organized youth camp-outs and restoration outings, led professional development workshops for teachers, and partnered with other youth organizations to help spark community action. We are incredibly proud of the last decade-and-a-half!

LOCAL GROUPS IN ACTION

Quadra Islanders young and old pitched in to make Sierra Quadra's 16th Earth Day beach clean-up a resounding success. Sierra local groups in Victoria, Nanaimo, Powell River and Vancouver hosted movie nights to bring awareness to the danger of oil pipelines and the plight of B.C.'s wild salmon. Sierra Comox Valley hosted Living Room Dialogues on



the proposed Raven coal mine, and Sierra Okanagan engaged landowners and other stakeholders to promote the preservation of endangered grasslands.

For updates on Sierra local groups on Quadra Island, Powell River, Comox Valley and Victoria, check out www.sierraclub.bc.ca/localgroups





LYNN MATHIESON

TANKERS AND PIPELINES

Enbridge isn't the only pipeline company in town. U.S. energy company Kinder Morgan wants to build a new pipeline from the tar sands to Burnaby, bringing over 400 oil tankers a year past Vancouver Island, and putting our coastline at risk of a catastrophic spill of tar sands oil.

In April, we hosted the Kinder Morgan Town Hall. Joining us via video was Bill McKibben, one of the world's foremost climate change activists and co-founder of 350.org. We also premiered our new climate action video, featuring C.R. Avery. The video has since gone viral – watch it on our YouTube channel.

THE FLATHEAD AND THE ELK

On March 21, Sierra Club BC and our partners in the Flathead Wild coalition generated extensive media coverage, showing that the Elk River, adjacent to the Flathead River Valley in southeast B.C. is being poisoned by toxic levels

of selenium leaching from open-pit coal mining waste rock.

Later the same day, the B.C. government announced that no new Elk coal mines will be approved until mining company Teck develops a comprehensive plan to manage toxic selenium. Then, operators of the proposed Bingay coal mine, slated for the proposed Flathead Wildlife Management Area, announced that mine would be put on hold indefinitely.

FORESTS AND GLOBAL WARMING

In February, we released a report, Carbon At Risk: B.C.'s Unprotected Old-Growth Rainforest. The report demonstrated that ongoing logging in unprotected old-growth rainforest is driving an increase in carbon emissions, essentially eliminating carbon sinks - one of the many values of old-growth forest. The report also pointed out that carbon emissions from logging makes it much more difficult to meet B.C.'s legislated greenhouse gas reduction targets.

FRACKING

Along with our work on Site C, we're also raising science-based concerns about hydraulic fracturing, or fracking. Fracking's unacceptable impacts on groundwater and its proposed massive expansion to produce liquefied natural gas (LNG) have prompted us to call for a science-based public enquiry of fracking impacts.



DON HOFFMAN

MINING REFORM

As part of our ongoing work to reform B.C.'s antiquated mining laws, we supported the many concerned Kamloops residents fighting the proposed Ajax open-pit copper and gold mine. The Ajax mine would be located within city limits, six kilometres downwind of twelve schools, four seniors' residences, a hospital and a university – not to mention hundreds of homes. Health concerns include particulate dust, potential chemical leaching and potential drinking water contamination.

YOU MAKE OUR WORK POSSIBLE!

When you give to Sierra Club BC, your donation protects B.C. wilderness and wildlife.

You can help support our work with three easy options:

- **Monthly Giving:** Convenient for you, helps Sierra Club BC year-round.
- **One-Time Gift:** Big or small, give a boost to our work when you're able to.
- **Legacy Giving:** Contact us for information about donating through your will.

To donate online or find out more information, please visit www.sierraclub.bc.ca/donate

Sierra Club of BC Foundation is a registered charity (charitable number 11914 9797 RR0001) and your donation is eligible for a tax receipt.