

Update from the Project Director

JUNE 2008



Peace region residents have had many opportunities over May and June to have their say about the potential Site C hydroelectric dam generating station at open houses and stakeholder meetings hosted by BC Hydro.

The deadline for this first round of project definition consultation is June 30th. The next round will be in the fall. If you haven't had a chance to provide your feedback in this current round, there is still time before June 30th. You may visit our website at www.bchydro.com/sitec to complete an online feedback form, or stop by the BC Hydro Community Consultation Office at 9948 100th Avenue.

Located near Fort St. John, Site C would be the third dam and generating station on the Peace River, should the project proceed. The purpose of the open houses and the public consultation process has been to provide the public with information about the potential impacts and benefits associated with this project and to receive public feedback.

No decision has been made to build Site C, and a decision on whether or not to proceed to construction is years away. Large hydro projects require a long lead time. As such, the provincial government, through the BC Energy Plan, has asked BC Hydro to begin consulting with communities, First Nations and stakeholders about the project.

Site C is one of several options being considered to help meet British Columbia's growing electricity needs. At the current rate of electricity consumption, BC Hydro's forecasting shows that over the next two decades, demand for electricity in British Columbia could grow by as much as 40 per cent. In fact, for much of the last decade, BC Hydro has been a net importer of electricity, depending on other jurisdictions to supply between 10 and 15 per cent of our electricity needs.

To meet B.C.'s future electricity needs, we need to conserve more, buy more and build more supply by reinvesting in our existing assets and consider new dependable power resources. The first and best way to meet our future electricity needs is through conservation and energy efficiency. BC's Energy Plan sets an ambitious target for British Columbians to realize 50 per cent of our new energy needs through conservation by 2020 – the most ambitious conservation target that we're aware of for a public utility around the world.

BC Hydro is also looking to innovative projects in B.C., such as small hydro, wind power and biomass projects to help meet our electricity needs. Three new procurement processes are planned or underway: a standing offer for clean electricity projects of less than 10 megawatts; a Clean Power Call for 5,000 gigawatt hours per year; and a call for bioenergy projects that generate electricity from under-utilized wood residues, including mountain pine beetle-affected timber.

BC Hydro is also embarking on a multi-year program of reinvesting in its infrastructure – \$3.4 billion in the next two years alone for the renewal and maintenance of key BC Hydro assets and demand-side management.

However, even with conservation, purchases from independent power producers and reinvestment in existing assets, we need to explore additional sources of power, such as Site C, that could provide dependable electricity throughout the year.

If built, Site C would have social and environmental impacts that must be identified and fully assessed. As part of the public consultation process, BC Hydro is updating work that took place when Site C was studied as an option over the last three decades, and is commissioning approximately 70 environmental and engineering studies as part of this current review of Site C.

BC Hydro is currently in Stage 2; of a five stage process for reviewing Site C. Stage 2 involves comprehensive consultation and project definition. At the end of Stage 2, BC Hydro will make a recommendation to the provincial government for decision on whether or not to proceed to Stage 3, which would involve regulatory reviews by the BC Utilities Commission and federal and provincial environmental assessments, among others.

I want to emphasize that consultation will continue throughout all stages of the project.

We want to hear your views. If you have not been able to attend an open house, there are fact sheets, reports and an online feedback form are available through our website at:

www.bchydro.com/sitec or phone our toll-free number at 1-877-217-0777. We look forward to hearing from you.

Hugo Shaw
Director, Site C Project

BC Hydro 

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