

Open Letter

Honourable Christy Clark
Premier
Government of British Columbia

Honourable Bill Bennett
Minister of Energy and Mines and Core Review
Government of British Columbia

By e-mail

Re: Additional electrical generation

I wish to express my views on this important subject. The pursuit of additional generation in the Province has largely centred around the \$7.9 billion Site C Project. I guess this is natural for a Province (not unlike Manitoba, Quebec and Newfoundland and Labrador) whose history in electrical generation has been largely hydro development. And there is no doubt it has been highly important for the prosperity of this Province.

In this context the Province through BC Hydro has been pursuing Site C. But as we all know, hydro development today is not the hydro development of a former era. There are more environmental issues, significant aboriginal issues in this particular case and the rise of generation alternatives unavailable in former times.

Three recent events have pressed me to write in addition to the obvious environmental, aboriginal, local area concerns and cost issues. They are:

1. The report of the Joint Review Panel with its concerns and unresolved issues.
2. The release of a report by The Canadian Geothermal Energy Association which potentially provides a cheaper more environmentally attractive alternative.
3. A letter to the Minister from Gwen Johansson, mayor of Hudson's Hope which proposes a process to better assess Site C and alternate generation sources.

It is no need for me to reiterate the Joint Panel issues. The Mayor of Hudson's Hope has done this and the report itself, and I am sure you are aware of them.

The Geothermal Energy Association's report needs to be taken seriously in that it alleges that there is a real possibility for this generation mode to be a realistic alternative. This needs to be tested. Unfortunately, it is not well known that geothermal generation for electricity is being used all over the world: from Costa Rica to New Zealand to the USA. In fact in the state of Nevada there are 435 mega watts of power from geothermal plants on stream right now.

I think Mayor Johansson has provided a way for the Government to proceed. Using provisions of the BC Utilities Commission Act the Province can use this existing Provincial vehicle to have an independent expert review of Site C and alternatives to a Site C and access issues raised by the joint panel. The BCUC Act says:

Commission's duties

5 (0.1) [Repealed by 2010-22-61.]

(1) On the request of the Lieutenant Governor in Council, it is the duty of the commission to advise the Lieutenant Governor in Council on any matter, whether or not it is a matter in respect of which the commission otherwise has jurisdiction.

(2) If, under subsection (1), the Lieutenant Governor in Council refers a matter to the commission, the Lieutenant Governor in Council may specify terms of reference requiring and empowering the commission to inquire into the matter.

(3) The commission may carry out a function or perform a duty delegated to it under an enactment of British Columbia or Canada.

(4)-(9) [Repealed 2010-22-61.]

And

Technical consultants

8 The commission may appoint or engage persons having special or technical knowledge necessary to assist the commission in carrying out its functions.

I would urge you to be refer the matter of additional electrical generation (base power) to the BCUC for further study and public review and to have it consider among other relevant matters :

1. The Site C project with special reference to the Joint Panel Report's findings/concerns.
2. An expert review of alternatives to Site C including natural gas generation and geothermal with special reference to the Canadian Geothermal Energy Association's Report. Is there a cheaper way?

Copies of this letter will be distributed to media and relevant people and organizations.

Honourable A. Brian Peckford P.C.