

November 10, 2017

## **Open Letter to the Honourable John Horgan, Premier and MLA, B.C. Cabinet Ministers and all other Members of the Legislative Assembly**

From: Harold Steves, Bob Fedderly, Steve Gray, Mae Burrows, Ken and Arlene Boon and many other concerned citizens.

Re: Site C job numbers lack public verification

The BC Utilities Commission (BCUC) Inquiry into Site C was long overdue. Its final report is based on an independent review of contradictory evidence, expert testimony, public input and First Nations' input.

The inquiry process was completed on time and provides compelling information in support of cancelling this project.

We urge you to resist the temptation now to re-test the evidence in the court of public opinion, with lobbyists and with the project proponent. The latter groups already have provided their input to the Commission as have a range of experts and those opposed to the project.

We are of the opinion that your government should respect the findings of the appointed regulator with oversight of these matters. We believe that to do otherwise, would be to sully the decision-making process laid out by government when you charged the BCUC to undertake this review.

The project is late, over-budget and it's been shown that we don't need the energy. We can generate more electricity without flooding our farms and sensitive ecosystems. We can avoid encroaching on First Nations land title. And, for every dollar spent, retrofits create twice as many jobs as dam construction.

We think a better energy plan would produce good paying jobs close to home in communities throughout BC. Keeping life affordable under the circumstances means limiting rate increases to only those made necessary by cancellation of the project.

We also recognize and applaud your government's commitment to improving public infrastructure and creating tens of thousands of construction jobs around BC.

It is against this backdrop that we have become increasingly alarmed about the position of some members of the Legislative Assembly, the ICBA (Independent Contractors and Businesses Association), CLAC (the Christian Labour Association of Canada) and some in the media who persist in making Site C about jobs.

This is a diversion. Their boosterism should not stand in the way of recognizing that Site C must be terminated to respect First Nation land title. It should be terminated for economic, food security and environmental reasons.

It is our view that some of the job numbers being bandied about are significantly inflated. We are concerned that public confusion on this point may make things more complicated for decision-makers, in an already complex situation.

In order to assist decision-makers, we have formulated a list of information requests whose answers may put these concerns to rest. These are presented in the attached Appendix I.

Regarding the jobs claims, the fact is that few, if any, of the trades jobs at Site C would have lasted for the duration of the project. Construction projects don't offer the same tradesperson a decade-long job, so we feel that it is disingenuous for individuals to claim that they moved to Site C for a ten-year job. Moving from one site to the next is the nature of construction work.

On the other hand, when the project is cancelled the government can implement a better energy and jobs plan. This will help address the legitimate need for employment in trades throughout BC. Cancellation will allow the government to provide more jobs, higher-quality jobs and more permanent jobs, than would be afforded by continuing Site C.

There will also be considerable work required to restore the site upon cancellation. This work should form part of a labour adjustment strategy for the BC resident workforce presently employed at Site C.

In summary, we think it is past due for your government to compel BC Hydro to provide the public a detailed explanation of the human resources deployed in the construction of Site C.

We make this request because it is our view that the public is poorly informed on Site C and, in particular, on the jobs questions that have been raised. We feel that greater transparency would be low-risk, low-cost and provide important information in support of your government's decision to cancel Site C.

Sincerely yours,

Harold Steves, Richmond  
Bob Fedderly, Fort St. John  
Mae Burrows, Burnaby  
Andrea Morrison, Fort St. John  
Adrienne Peacock, Belcarra  
Rita Wong, Vancouver  
Jackie Larkin, Metchosin  
D Lynn Chapman, Roberts Creek  
Fae Shaw, Kelowna  
Candace Batycki, Nelson  
Diane Culling, Fort St. John  
Claire Kujundzic, Wells  
Bill Horne, Wells  
Dr. Amy Lubik, Port Moody  
Charlotte Ericson, Victoria  
Heather Menzies, Gabriola Island  
Alan Dolan, Sooke  
Ruth Ann Darnall, Fort St. John  
Taryn Skalbnaia, Peachland  
Terry Dance-Bennink, Victoria  
Karen and David Kellett, Prince George  
Rob Taylor, Peachland  
Si Transken, Prince George  
Ken Forest, Charlie Lake  
Ross Peck, Hudson's Hope  
Danielle Layman, Fort St. John  
Wendy Holm, Bowen Island  
Harold Rhenisch, Vernon  
Crystal Spicer, Edgewood  
Kathryn Cook, Victoria  
Dirk van Stralen, Wells  
Charlotte Kurta, Quesnel  
Theresa Healy, Prince George  
Elaine Hooper, Sooke  
Lynn Shervill, Smithers  
Karen Kellett, Prince George  
Freya Keddie, Victoria  
David Kellett, Prince George  
Eva Manly, Nanaimo  
Jay Gildon, Smithers

Ken and Arlene Boon, Fort St. John  
Steve Gray, Victoria  
George Smith, Gibsons  
Galen Armstrong, Salt Spring Island  
Vicky Husband, Saanich  
Randy Hadland, Dawson Creek  
Eoin Finn, Squamish  
Morag Keegan-Henry, Vancouver  
Hedy Conwright, Prince George  
Jeffrey Dinsdale, Quesnel  
Jacqueline Holler, Prince George  
Dennis Kuch, Bella Coola  
Pat Moss, Smithers  
Nadia Nowak, Prince George  
Robert Mellalieu, West Kelowna  
Sheila Peters, Smithers  
Dave Talbot, Comox  
Fred Wah, Kootenay Lake  
Des Wilson, Belcarra  
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Katie Hayhurst, Bella Coola  
Dave Jorgenson, Wells  
Joe Foy, New Westminster  
Anne Hill, Terrace  
Margaret Ouwehand, Kitimat  
Judy Campbell, Wells  
Alison Candela, Smithers  
Peter Kerr, Kelowna  
Greg Knox, Terrace  
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## APPENDIX I

### HUMAN RESOURCES DEPLOYED ON THE SITE C PROJECT

1. Please ask BC Hydro to release pertinent sections of Contractors' contracts regarding criteria for job data collection especially with regard to how the data is collected and the definition of what time equivalent constitutes a 'job'.

All employment figures are self-reported by contractors with no third-party or any other verification. Apparently contractors are required, in their contracts, to provide monthly workforce information but the criteria for the data collection, i.e. whether occasional, part-time (PT) or full-time (FT) employees reported is nowhere to be found in public documents. BC Hydro contracts are kept secret from the public so the public has no way of validating numbers reported to determine which jobs are occasional, PT, FT or full-time equivalents.

2. Ask BC Hydro to determine the time equivalency of various professional and semi-professional jobs, and whether the Site C work is part of a larger portfolio.

The third page of BC Hydro's Monthly Employment reports displays the numbers of workers in each job classification. The graph includes various professional and semi-professional jobs including "Engineers and Project Team....comprised of on-site and off-site workers...consultants, BC Hydro Construction Management and other Site C project staff". It is unclear how many people employed in these positions undertake Site C work on an occasional or part-time basis as part of their other full time employment for example with BC Hydro. Therefore, it is unclear whether any of these employees would actually get 'pink slips' if Site C was terminated.

3. Ask BC Hydro to provide FTEs on the "non-construction" numbers or verify that they are indeed occasional employees to the project and whether they would retain full time employment in their companies if Site C was terminated.

Further confusion occurs with professionals listed as "non-construction contractors" (all phrases in quotation marks are from BC Hydro's Monthly Employment reports) which might be environmental monitoring companies, engineers, security, biologists, laboratory workers, and others.

4. Ask BC Hydro to identify how many jobs in doing public infrastructure work are reported as Site C jobs.

Employees doing public road building or power transmission upgrading for the general benefit of the region are also listed in the Employment Reports. This is the type of work that is going on in communities throughout BC as part of the government's responsibility for such matters. We also wish to point out that some commentators have said that we will have nothing to show for dollars already expended. This is inaccurate given demonstrable improvements to public infrastructure that will be with us for years.

5. Ask BC Hydro to clarify the actual job functions and FTE details of the "worker accommodation and services...office staff...and supplies" categories.

"Worker accommodation and services...office staff...and supplies" are also included but without clarity as to whether the work is occasional (i.e. the delivery of a porta-potty to the site or groceries or linen to the accommodations) or part-time (i.e. one-afternoon per month bookkeeping services related to Site C for a contractor).

6. Ask BC Hydro to explain the employee days they are documenting with this number.

BC Hydro reports a total workforce of 2,357 for the month of August. Is this the number of workers who showed up to work every day? Or perhaps this is the maximum or minimum number on site on a specific day in August? Or is this the average number of workers each day, or the total number of workers on site each day divided by the number of workdays in the month?

7. Ask BC Hydro to verify the number of actual "construction" workforce in August 2017, in all job classifications so that the public can get a clearer picture of worker numbers. And further, would BC Hydro explain the discrepancies in numbers.

There are discrepancies in the reporting of actual construction workers. As an example, in August 2017 the Labour Relations Board Industrial Relations Office was involved in a certification vote-taking place on site. At that time, Petrowest claimed to have 800 eligible employees including dependent contractors.

The BC Hydro report bunched together "Construction and Non-Construction Contractors" so there is no way of getting at the workforce or dependent contractor numbers.

One of the unions involved in the certification vote, the Operating Engineers, estimated that there were 570 eligible employees to participate in the certification vote. For the same month BC Hydro reported that about 510 heavy equipment operators, plus 5 crane operators were working. This is an example of why we do not have confidence in the Employment reports as a basis for decision-making.

8. Please ask BC Hydro for its health and safety emergency plan given that it is not up-to-date on employment figures.

Given the evidence of poor health-and-safety practices (39 near misses, 10 fires, 339 incident inspections according to WorkSafe in a typical month), and what now seems to be an habitual 2 month tardiness of BC Hydro's reports, what would BC Hydro do in an emergency given that they don't seem to know how many workers are on site?

9. Ask BC Hydro to explain the criteria that reporting contractors use to provide the 'primary residence' estimate.

There is evidence that in the spring and summer of 2017, employees living in accommodations have been encouraged to use a local address wherever possible. In the Employment reports, employees have apparently been asked to report their primary residence. The Employment report notes "an estimate is provided wherever possible if primary residence is not given". We are asking for firmer evidence of the actual Fort St. John residents who work at Site C.

10. Has BC Hydro or the government undertaken a study or estimate of how many workers who were previously employed at Site C have left the area, compared to those who remained and transitioned to another industry.

Employment at Site C has proven to respond to the ups-and-downs of the economy especially with regard to oil and gas. Two years ago, many employees transitioned from oil and gas jobs to Site C jobs, and now there seems to be a marked transition back to oil and gas jobs with a high demand for workers in the Site C area.