

Subject: BCUC site C Inquiry

We ALL could use a Peaceful Night's Sleep.

My Name is Esther Pedersen and I live in Grandhaven BC on our Farm, right above the proposed Site "C" Dam worksite.

Our family is one, if not the closest residents to the worksite.

I wanted to speak at the BCUC hearings but chose not to for 2 main reasons; 1) 5 minutes is not enough time to say what I have to say and 2) I could not decide what to say, from the many things that needed to be said about the affects and costs to us and those who live in around the 86 kms of river Valley affected by this project.

Here is a written submission that discusses what it is like living near a 24/7 Mega Project construction site for the past 2+ years.

1st I want to talk about the 2 + years we have not been able to sleep in our home peacefully, since the beginning of the Dam construction project, from about Aug 1st 2015 to present. This has been our 3rd summer and coming up to our 3rd winter and all days between.

This lack of sleep, is partly because we are concerned about the future of the Valley, all its inhabitants and the consequences of the losses that will be suffered due to the building of this project. From rare and medicinal plants to animal, fish, birds and human lives that live in and around the stretch of the Peace Valley, its affected tributary rivers and streams, the losses are immense and in our opinion, unnecessary .

Also, we think about our beautiful Farm, way of life and our home all which will be lost due to Sloughing should the Dam gates ever be closed.

But, the most obvious reason we are awake at night, is we are subjected 24/7/365 days/year to noise, extremely bright LED lights on all night, dust and vibration due to blasting at the construction site, happening below our farm, 24/7 for the past 2+ years.

We are far from alone in suffering this constant distress. Residents of the subdivisions of, The Old Fort, (right below the Dam site on the river), the Old Fort Road which is the windy road leading to the river, Grandhaven, Mcleod subdivision and those who live in the river Valley, (as the Valley walls act as a sound chamber that funnels wind, dust and noise up and down the Valley depending on which way the winds are blowing), have all suffered loss of sleep and/or quality of their quiet suburban lives due to this project and its 24/7 work schedule.

As well residents living in and around the Old Wutthrich Shale pit on the 271rd, also are subjected to constant noise, dust, LED lights, on ALL NIGHT and vibrations from excavation, blasting and continous heavy truck traffic around the clock in their areas.

Local residents are not the only people subjected to this torture, as BC Hydro's damsite work camp is within the Red Zone on BC Hydro's own chart.

This Chart was brought forward for discussion by the Joint review panel, at the request of female chair member, Madame Beaudet (sp?) during the "Health and Social" segment of the hearings. She wished to discuss what Hydro's plans were for those living and working within the red and pink zones, which are 2 and 5 KM circles around the project's worksite. Within these circles, the predicted Noise, dust, smoke and light levels, are up to 8X the allowable comfort limits by Health Canada Standards for residential areas!

Siobahn Jackson spoke for BC Hydro and her answer was, "A hotel or other temporary accommodations would be found, during this time for affected residents."

Providing temporary accommodation for residents, within the red and pink zones around the project, would be a huge extra cost added to the project, as approximately 200 residents, for example, live just at the Old Fort subdivision alone!

I would also like to make note that it was at that JRP session, that I discovered the fact, our farm was also within their "Red Zone" (that's BC Hydro's consultation process, find out by accident the way this project will affect your life). As if we would sleep away from our farm, leaving 28 horses 4 dogs and 4 cats here alone? I doubt it.

To my knowledge nothing has ever been offered to those who live in and around the red and pink zones of the project.

With this answer, female chair, Madame Beaudet (sp) exclaimed, "But your work camp, with your workers, is also within the red zone of 8X the allowable limits for noise, lights, dust, smoke, vibrations! Your workers will be trying to sleep while this is going on?" to which Hydro spokeswoman, Siobahn Jackson, smartly replied, "Oh yes, but our camp is state of the art sound proof and air quality controlled."

Forced lack of Sleep is accepted internationally as a form of Torture! It is administered by using loud noise, continuous exposure to bright lights, water and/or inflicting pain. It also causes Circadian Disorders, an illness brought on by altered sleep wake patterns seen in night shift workers and those whose normal sleep/wake patterns are constantly altered. This is a real and well studied disorder. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Circadian_rhythm_sleep_disorder

We did not do anything wrong as Peaceful residents living in this area, but we are being subjected to this torture daily 24/7 and have been for the past 2+ years! WHY?

There has been more than enough expert reporting, on the predicted and real need (or shall I say complete lack of Need) for power in BC, from both BC hydro's own reports and those expert reports submitted by private individuals and groups. NIL, nada, none, no power is needed in BC in the near future, to meet the demands of British Columbians, so what's with the 24/7/365 days/year rush to build this dam?

All other major Highway and bridge projects being built near residences, work on a normal 8 AM to 5 PM schedule or 7 AM to 7 PM for those working 12 hour shifts, in BC. This is because it is recognized that projects built around residences must respect those residents, quality of life during construction and try to mitigate their disturbance as best possible, by at least giving them peace and quiet at night. To function normally during the day, at work, school or play and for optimal health. We ALL need to SLEEP.

Why is this project running with double the workers needed and double the size of camp required to have 2 - 12 hour shifts of workers working 24/7, at exactly double the cost to run the construction, if we don't NEED the power in BC's near future?

Well, we all know..... to meet a tacky Promise, made at a funeral..... "The now infamous, 'Point of NO Return' to beat an upcoming election, is the only reason."

So what now for us, wear earplugs, close our windows to shut out fresh country air and the dirt, in the heat of summer, wear eye masks, or purchase expensive window coverings, to shut out the natural light and bright LED Lights?

Why are we being inconvenienced with these disturbances to our formerly Peaceful lives here, with this project's unnecessary 24/7 work schedule ?

If smoking cigarettes in public places and near doorways is now illegal in BC, because sucking in second hand smoke infringes on non smokers rights to clean air, then also shouldn't second hand light, noise, dust AND Smoke, from another's business or residence, be considered an infringement of people's basic right for clean air, water, food and quality of life?

Wearing earplugs at night is not a safe, nor reasonable solution for us. This is because should there be an emergency and we needed to awaken quickly, for the safety of the animals in our care and/or ourselves, we can't be sleeping with earplugs in our ears at night and be able to awaken in an emergency.

In fact, no one, for their own safety in an emergency, should be forced to sleep in earplugs, because of continuous night time noises caused by others.

We built our house with a window to see the stars, northern lights (not Hydros LED lights) and sunrises from our bedroom. It is stifling hot on many days in the summer and we leave our windows open for fresh air from spring to fall. This not only lets in fresh air and birdsong, but now the incessant beeping of vehicles and equipment backing up, noise of loaders dumping and scraping rock, heavy equipment noises, blasting and dirt, 24/7.

What is the "Cost" of that, being as this inquiry is ALL about time, money and cost?

Well besides the costs to BC Hydro/tax/ratepayers of, double the workforce and camp size required. Those exposed to the torture of constant noise and nighttime exposure to LED lights, suffer from morning fatigue and a lack of alertness that carries on throughout the day.

This means all persons exposed to this forced disturbed sleep, are less alert at school, when playing sports, driving vehicles or operating equipment, and/or at their place of employment. Here in the North, many of our resource or medical workers must be alert to function properly, for the safety of themselves, their co-workers and bystanders or other drivers on the roads and highways.

Most people need to get up, be awake and alert in the mornings, drive to work , or attend school, inside and out of their homes, during normal daylight hours between 7 AM to 7 PM depending on their shifts and schedules.

Those suffering from lack of sleep, forced or otherwise, and exposed to blue/bright LED lights suffer health issues such as obesity, thyroid imbalances, depression, anxiety, and is linked to cancers. As well those driving and operating equipment while tired, are a danger to themselves and everyone else around them while trying to function in this semi alert state of Adrenal fatigue.

Often to compensate for this lack of alertness, people begin to rely on substances such as caffeine, over the counter, prescribed and illegal drugs to stay awake and after several night shifts of bright light exposure, having their natural circadian cycles altered, also need medication to help fall asleep when not working night shifts. This is a real tangible " Cost" to quality of life.

In other words, people suffer from a constant state of jet lag from disturbed sleep wake patterns.

That is a "Real Human" cost of this project running on this bizarre 24/7 schedule year round .

In the winters, the immediate site and the surrounding skies, are lit up like the Day, by bright LED lights. Once the leaves are off the trees this light, lights our bedroom up, to the point that we no longer have to turn on a light to find the bathroom at night. As well the cold air seems to carry the sound better and combined with no leaves to buffer sound, we can still hear the noise through closed windows in the winter.

Should the gov't decide to proceed with this project, while they are deliberating their decision of its outcome. Or when they decide to stop and remediate this site, after the decision to cancel is made, then PLEASE stop the 24/7 torture to local residents of Noise, light, dust Smoke, by operating only during normal working hours 8AM to 5PM or 7AM to 7PM, reducing Costs to taxpayers, by using less workers and thus operating a smaller camp. Working on site and at the Sahle pit, should only be allowed to commence during normal, daylight hours, so we all can get some SLEEP!

We feel that the rush to get to "The Point of NO Return" ahead of the last election, has been a complete fail, at the expense of our Quality of lives and many dollars have been wasted, starting the project without the BCUC's Scrutiny and recommendations.

Our hope is the current gov't decides, as other gov'ts before them have, stop this project altogether, forever, lift the Flood reserve from our Valley. So we, and all the other human and non human, Valley and surrounding area residents, can stay in our homes and once again live and SLEEP in PEACE.

Thank you for taking the time to read and consider the contents of this submission.

M. Esther R. Pedersen,
Grandhaven, BC.

Photos are of the views between my pony's ears from the hayfield behind our house, which is a little farther away from the site than our home.

The view of the Moberly river just above its confluence from my tractor, on the hayfield, in front of our house.

A view or two of "Dam Protesters Point" with Friends and myself. This is the property ahead of our house.

A view from our bedroom window of the Super Moon last fall and showing LED lights 2 km away that shine bright enough to light our bedroom at night.

And a sunrise taken from our bedside and the reason we do NOT want curtains or window coverings.













