



Williams Lake & District CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

"THE VOICE OF BUSINESS"

December 1, 2018

Commission Secretary
British Columbia Utilities Commission
900 Howe Street
Suite 410
Vancouver, BC V6Z 2N3

BC Utilities Corporation:

On behalf of the Board of Directors of the Williams Lake & District Chamber of Commerce we offer our support to Atlantic Power (Williams Lake Power Plant), as it is a major employer of the Williams Lake business community.

Since 1993, it has provided a stable source of electricity for the BC Hydro grid, well-paying long-term jobs and economic stability for its employees and the local economy.

A brief list of the positive impacts the Plant has had on the community include:

- The plant has helped to reduce particulate emissions in the Williams Lake Airshed by 90% since it began operating in 1993;
- Lobbied for a 20% expansion of rail tie use to fuel their operation without any adverse impact to the environment and air quality;
- It directly employs 30 fulltime employees earning above average wages;
- It supports many more jobs in the region through the annual expenditure of about \$8 million on goods and services;
- It is the Number One tax payer for the City of Williams Lake at \$1.2 million per year
- Spends 8 times this amount in the Region purchasing goods and services
- Atlantic Power is also a proactive corporate citizen contributing approximately \$12,000 each year to support community groups and projects.

Recently, our Board has learned of the continuing efforts of the Plant's extension of its EPA with BC Hydro to June 30, 2019. We understand that the completion of BC Hydro's Integrated Resource Plan will address the role of biomass in the future mix of resources which then appears to be subject of acceptance of the BC Utilities Corporation (BCUC).

The critical part of the BCUC process is that should acceptance not be forthcoming, the result could be termination of the short-term EPA extension currently in place. It would

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also risk the possibility of a longer-term extension of the EPA being negotiated with BC Hydro in the future.

The Chamber believes that the result of non-acceptance puts family supporting jobs, substantial annual economic activity and continuing cleaner air in the community at stake.

Our area was devastated in 2017 and then Region was again hit in 2018 with Wild Fires. There is a serious need to clean up our forests and mitigate future fire related concerns for loss of life, livelihood and property. Considering the overabundance of fiber laying on the ground in our forests, beetle kill and dying trees the fuel source for Atlantic Power is immeasurable and can go far to help "Fire Smart" our area. As if it was enough to burn like it did, the resulting "debris" (burned forest) is another source of fuel for Atlantic Powers operations. In our opinion taking this win/win scenario out of play by not allowing Atlantic Power to play that key role to safeguard our Region would be irresponsible.

Accordingly, the Chamber strongly recommends that the BC Utilities Corporation approve the short-term EPA extension to ensure the continued long-term presence of this valuable member of our Williams Lake community.

Yours truly,



Charlene Harrison
President Williams Lake & District Chamber of Commerce

cc: Atlantic Power Corporation Williams Lake; BC Hydro; City of Williams Lake; Ministry of Energy & Mines; Ministry of Forests; Ministry of Environment; Premier John Horgan.