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BCUC INQUIRY RESPECTING SITE C

F 242-1

Date: October 05, 2017

Subject: Overview of issues


Hello;

Thank you for these public hearings. I appreciate the difficult task you have undertaken.

Attached please find my submission.

Regards,

Hildegard Bechler



October 5, 2017

**BC Utilities Commission
Site C public hearings**

Commissioners;

The urgency of making the decision on Site C necessarily limited the terms of reference to those immediately essential: the monetary public interest in suspending or stopping construction. Consideration of the many public interests beyond finances—of Peace Valley residents and every person in BC—has to happen before the next step is taken. This requires at least suspending construction until these larger public interest issues are heard, to meet the requirements of democratic process and Canada’s Constitution.

Limiting your report to the government to the financial issues does not preclude your also envisioning the critical survival issues the public has repeatedly raised. They weigh in that decision, suspension or ending it—and argue very much for ending it.

1. Food security

Agricultural land: rare in the North, productive for decades by dedicated farmers;
Aboriginal resources: hunting, fishing, and food-gathering lands sustaining the people for 12,000 years or more, and still doing so.
These food resources have no alternative supply, as electricity does.

2. Laws of Canada

Treaties with Native Nations must be respected. This government has committed to honouring the UN Declaration of Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

3. Water export loss of water rights

Sequestering that water behind a dam makes sale to the U.S. possible. We would lose the rights to that water under NAFTA; and have to supply them in perpetuity even if we run short.

4. Privatization of critical public infrastructure

Aqueduct Alliance, including Goldman Sachs and the World Resources Institute are “mapping opportunities for world-wide water speculators and investors”.

Global capital corporations would essentially own this dam for the more than 70 years BC ratepayers would have to pay for it, with market interest rates. Public assets—the ‘real economy’—are sold incrementally to private banks and investment corporations by way of through debt and public-private partnerships. We would become dependent on market forces.

5. Focusing Capital on the Long Term

Site C is the ideal investment for global capital corporations now moving beyond quarterly capitalism toward “Focusing Capital on the Long Term”.

This idea is promoted by FCLT, a think tank (Larry Fink of BlackRock is on the Board) co-founded in 2014 by Canada Pension Plan Investment Board (CPPIB) head Mark Wiseman and global ‘turn-around specialist’ McKinsey & Company. The head of this company—which has effected privatization of public infrastructure and services world-wide, including England’s National Health Service—is Dominic Barton: Trudeau’s choice for “New Economy Czar”, Chair of his Economic Advisory Board. “I believe very much in creative destruction”. He suggests CIB spend \$500 billion.

Eventually such a dam may fall to the Trudeau government’s “asset recycling” plan: the sale of public infrastructure to pay for new. This is in line with BC Hydro’s increasing privatization; it may lead to the same shock Alberta residents suffered: in 2014 Warren Buffet bought the Alberta Grid, serving 4/5 of the province, having cost 16 billion dollars to build, for 3.2 billion.

6. Total cost of a dam and related systems

Given experience with cost overruns in all massive projects, the twelve or more billion dollars we would have to pay would be far greater when all transmission and other systems would be in place.

7. Undemocratic Site C decision

The Liberal government shocked many with Christy Clark’s declaration that they would get Site C “past the point of no return” before the election. No public consultation. They were clearly meeting the interests of their corporate clients.

8. Cost-efficient Alternatives

Energy efficiency, on-site renewable energy systems—small-scale solar, wind and geothermal systems for homes, government and industry—can supply all BC’s electricity requirements. Only a fraction of the billions that might be wasted on a dam can finance, through tax and other incentives, the transition to sustainable energy so many call for.

Shifting subsidies to fossil industries and dams, we can solve the fundamental problem: financial access to decentralized systems.

This fledgling transition, driven by dedicated people, already creates new industries and jobs in every community, revitalizes local economies, and gives us a chance at survival.

**Climate solutions are profitable not costly
as saving fuel costs less than buying fuel.**

Raising global energy productivity by just 2 percent a year...would stabilize carbon emissions; raising it by 3 percent a year would stabilize climate....

Energy efficiency, the main tool for profitable climate protection, could actually do the whole job if pursued to its modern potential.

Dr. Amory Lovins "Stop Wasting Energy"

RMI Library, Search: www.rmi.org/sitepages/pid173.php#C0610

Decentralized renewables: www.smallisprofitable.org

Small is Profitable describes 207 ways in which the size of "electrical resources"—devices that make, save, or store electricity—affects their economic value. It finds that properly considering the economic benefits of "distributed" (decentralized) electrical resources typically raises their value by a large factor, often approximately tenfold, by improving system planning, utility construction and operation, and service quality, and by avoiding societal costs.

Make wealth, not waste.

With respect,
Hildegard Bechler

