BRITISH COLUMBIA UTILITIES COMMISSION

IN THE MATTER OF THE UTILITIES COMMISSION ACT
R.S.B.C. 1996, CHAPTER 473

And

British Columbia Hydro and Power Authority
British Columbia Utilities Commission Inquiry
Respecting Site C

VICTORIA, B.C.
October 11th, 2017

FIRST NATIONS INPUT SESSION
VICTORIA

BEFORE:
D.M. Morton, Commision Chair/Panel Chair
D.A. Cote, Commissioner
K.A. Keilty, Commissioner
R.I. Mason, Commissioner

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VICTORIA, B.C.

October 11th, 2017

(PROCEEDINGS COMMENCED AT 4:16 P.M.)

THE CHAIRPERSON: Good afternoon. Thank you for joining us as we are finishing up our two and a half schedule of Site C Inquiry Community Input sessions around the province. My name is Dave Morton and I'm the Panel Chair for the Site C Inquiry and I'm Chair of the British Columbia Utilities Commission. With me today are my fellow Site C Inquiry panel members, Dennis Cote on my left, Karen Keilty on my right. Richard Mason is on her right.

This First Nations input session is part of the second important phase of Site C Inquiry. As you know, we spent the first six weeks of this inquiry collecting data and analysis from many parties interested in and affected by BC Hydro’s Site C project. The quality of those submissions was commendable. Many people committed a great deal to producing a quality submissions within the short timeframe that was provided. This affirms what we already know, that there are experts and affected parties who can bring us insight into the many complexities of evaluating the economic impact of the Site C project.

We now have the task of making findings in
this inquiry and we recognize that our findings are better with your input.

Before we begin, you've met Mr. Bemister from Allwest Reporting. His team is recording and transcribing this input session, and the live audio can be streamed from our website www.sitecinquiry.com and following this session, a transcript will also be available on that site.

I would ask that when you make your submissions that you please don't provide personal information other than your own name as the session will be transcribed. And please be careful about confidential information.

We are aware of the circulation of the unredacted Deloitte report in the first phase of the inquiry and the information redacted in that report was done so to ensure that current and future negotiations between Hydro and its suppliers were not compromised as a result of the information being publicly available.

We still consider the information confidential despite its inappropriate disclosure in the press. We may redact submissions that contain references to that confidential information or any other, both here today as well as as in written submissions filed.
Before beginning your presentation, please state your first name and spell your last name for the transcription record.

With that, we are ready to open this First Nation input session in Victoria, B.C. on October the 11, 2017.

Will our first speaker please begin your presentation?

Proceeding Time 4:19 p.m. T02

SUBMISSIONS BY COUNCILLOR WAQUAN (#0248):

COUNCILLOR WAQUAN: Hello, my name is Calvin Waquan, C-A-L-V-I-N W-A-Q-U-A-N. I'm a Councillor of the Mikasew Cree First Nation, father of two and a young leader in my community. I welcome this opportunity to join you today to speak on behalf of the Mikasew Cree and to address the impacts of the Site C dam on our traditional Treaty 8 territory and the endless drain on our way of life.

For those of you who may now know, Mikasew has occupied the union of the Peace Athabaska Rivers for centuries. This is the inland fresh water river delta in North America, one of the largest. We are also signature to Treaty 8 and have title to land in Wood Buffalo National Park, which is a UNESCO world heritage site that lies within Peace Athabaska Delta, the PAD.
Why is our location relevant to BC Hydro?
It's building the largest dam in the province since 1984. Upriver are our territory within the water systems our people relied upon for generations, and that our generation must secure in order for our children to live and flourish as our ancestors intended.

How does the project impact Mikasew Cree?
Our people have lived on the Delta for hundreds of years and know its ecology well. The Delta is our water source. It's our tap. The Delta offers economic opportunities like fishing, guiding, tourism. It's our bank.

The delta bears thousands of waterfowl, deer, moose, large northern fish like pike, Arctic grayling, walleye and lake trout, and fertile land for agriculture. It is our refrigerator.

The delta holds recreation and spiritual activities for our nation and it's our medicine. The delta raised our ancestors and has witnessed growth of our children, including my own. It embodies our survival for generation to generation. And saying that, it's our mother.

So what are the impacts Site C dam have on our tap, our bank, our refrigerator, our medicine, our mother? First let's talk about the tap.
Mikasew Cree rely on the Delta for clean drinking water and steady water levels to promote life on the delta. Water is life and water is boss. [foreign words spoken] in my language. The Joint Review Panel conducted an assessment to review the potential impacts on the dam on the Delta. The panel determined that the delta -- or the dam would have no impact on the PAD. In its own words, the PAD is not within the spatial boundaries of the environmental assessment because the proponent calculated that there would be no detectable project effects at the PAD. As such, no environmental assessment for the largest hydroelectric project in the province is required for the PAD.

This is convenient for BC Hydro. With Site C BC Hydro will have even greater control water flow downstream into the delta. They have their hands on the tap, but they do not wait for the water in the basin. But this is less convenient for Mikasew Cree who know the ecology of the delta and are impacted by the smallest changes. Seasonal spring flooding of the Peace River regenerates the fragile ecosystem by depositing fertile soil into the delta. Ice jams in the winter release spring flood, pouring vital nutrients into the water, and feeding plants and animal life. Muskegs are drying up and are crucial
for the filtration process within our ecosystems.

Scientists like Dr. Martin Carver confirm that the regulation for ecosystems for the dams on the Peace River, are reshaping this crucial delta recharge. As the W.A.C. Bennett and the Peace canyon dams already do, Site C would retain water in the spring and release it in the winter to optimize flow rates when British Columbians need electricity the most. But by reversing the natural operation of the river system, these two dams have reduced and in some places even eliminated the spring flooding of the delta.

Flood flows on the Peace River adjacent to the delta have fallen as much as 12 feet. In other words, BC Hydro is turning off the tap when the Delta needs it the most. The joint review panel prefers to review the portion of the Peace River where they want the dam in isolation, but you can't cut the tap away from the plumbing.

Looking at the potential impacts of Site C in the Wood Buffalo National Park, the UNESCO reactive monitoring mission calls this approach simplistic, and Mikasew agrees.

Now, let's talk about our bank. So the project does not provide Delta with the seasonal recharge it needs to promote ecosystem services, but
it is at least good for our bank accounts. BC Hydro claims that Site C is required to meet the long-term energy and the capacity needs of BC Hydro residential, commercial and industrial customers.

Proceeding Time 4:24 p.m. T03

If we accept the statement as true, Site C would benefit our bank accounts and help all of us who rely on electricity. But independent research by UBC's water governance program proves that Site C is not necessary to meet the B.C.'s long-term electricity needs. We agree with three financial reasons. Those authors found for why the project should not be approved. The significant decline in the cost of alternative sources of electricity, namely wind; the significant decline in the export market prices; and the dramatic drop since BC Hydro forecasted electricity needs.

Moreover it costs up to $1.5 billion more than an alternative that would combine additional electricity conservation wind power and pump storage. This makes less sense for B.C.'s bank account, our B.C.'s bank account, yeah. So something may be required to meet the province's energy needs, but it's not Site C.

Even if the dam is not good for the B.C.'s budget, it is actually bad for Mikasew. Many members
of our nation rely on the fish harvest in Fort Chipewyan, hunting and guiding, ecotourism, and additional income for trapping. The existing dams and reservoirs on the Peace have already reduced our fish harvest at Fort Chipewyan, contributing to the loss of seasonable jobs and cash income for our peoples.

Prior to the construction of the Bennett Cam, most Mikasew relied on fur trading as their primary source of cash income, and commercial fishing, which is obsolete now. No measurable income can be earned from trapping since the construction of the Bennett Dam. No member of Mikasew has been compensated for their loss.

If Site C impacts our bank, we will not hesitate to pursue damages against BC Hydro, like any business. We expect that BC Hydro would pass these costs to B.C. ratepayers, which brings me to our refrigerator. Mikasew relies on the pad for its diverse plant and animal species. The Mikasew Cree continue to hunt water fowl, muskrat, beaver, moose on the rivers, ponds and meadows of the delta. These animals thrive on the wetlands. We fish for many diverse fish. B.C. needs seasonal recharge and fresh nutrients to flourish. We also farm for the soil. Our farm on the soil of the delta and agricultural growth relies on the soil from the seasonal flooding.
Since the construction of W.A.C. Bennett and the Peace Canyon Dams, mechanized alteration of the water flow has virtually eliminated spring flooding of the delta. Water scarcity has assaulted the delta ecosystem. Less than 50 percent of the natural habitat remains available to our people. Due to operational requirements, Site C will release excess volumes of water to compromise the seasonal balance of the wetlands. That balance, that recharge that makes hunting and fishing possible and meaningful. Put simply, Site C threatens to unplug our refrigerator. That means either that we have to pursue damages or BC Hydro will need to make potentially expensive operational changes to Site C to avoid these effects.

But could we at least rely on our medicines? Many locations on the delta are accessible by water. Fishing, hunting and gathering camps, burial sites, historic places, places of ceremony, places my people go to learn. In earlier days the rivers and tributaries provided transportation and led the permanent connection to places spread across the delta. Through the PAD we maintain our connection to our ancestors, to our tradition, and the Creator. Visiting those places we teach our children and our grandchildren how to live a good life. Living in our
spiritual places makes us strong and resilient. Our relationship to the delta is our medicine. It facilitates healing within our people and within our nation.

The joint review panel did not conduct an assessment to determine the impact of Site C on our spiritual connection to the delta, deciding to instead remove any discussion of treaty rights from review. The PAD is already diminished by oil, gas, mining, and other industries. Meanwhile Site C puts the home of our spiritual connections under siege. It threatens and poisons our medicine and our way of life. While our community will pay social and cultural costs, B.C. ratepayers will have to pay financial costs to compensate for our loss of way of life.

Finally, water is like our mother. PAD is like our mother. Our mothers create, store, and share life. They carry the lifeblood of our culture and the way of our life, therefore represent the long-term sustainability of Mikasew. Just as we cannot exist without our mother, we cannot reproduce and regenerate without the delta.

So what does Site C do for our long-term sustainability?

Proceeding Time 4:29 p.m. T04

How will Site C impact our capacity to
regenerate for centuries to come in the delta? My ancestors signed Treaty 8 to guarantee that our way of life, their fishing, hunting, trapping and everything that came with those activities would continue uninterrupted. And in 1899 the Crown promised my ancestors survival of the way of life. In the language of the treaty and Her Majesty the Queen, hereby agrees with the said Indians that they shall have the right to pursue their usual vocations of hunting, trapping and fishing throughout the tract surrendered.

Commissioner Roth stated:

"As all the rights you now have will not be interfered with, therefore anything you get in addition must be clear gain."

For Mikasew, as for many other nations, this is the most important condition to the signing of the Treaty 8, the ability to hunt, fish and trap as we have always done. The Crown promised no interference and what now? Site C would transform forever the existing conditions of the delta. Site C would render the promises the Treaty 8 impossible to fulfill.

Our traditional way of life is also now protected by the constitutional guarantees of Section 35 of the Constitution Act of 1982. Site C endangers all hope of reconciliation, the goal of Section 35.
We don't want to be forced to prove the dams impacts on our way of life through litigation, negotiation and if possible compensation. This decision serves nobody. The project stalls, the government squander resources on disagreement, parties grow hostile and any hope of reconciliation fades.

Meanwhile we ask what Site C will do for Mikasew's long-term ability to survive. What will Site C do to our mother?

I will conclude by asking the Commission to carefully consider potential impacts of the Site C dam on the Mikasew's way of life, our mother and our lifeline and explain in your report that these are financial costs that BC Hydro failed to acknowledge but that could be shouldered by B.C. ratepayers if the project is canceled.

Thank you for your time and (foreign word) to my ancestors, and to late Willie Coutoreille for fighting for the PAD.

Thank you.

THE CHAIRPERSON: Thank you, sir.

Proceeding Time 4:31 p.m. T05

MS. LEPINE: I guess I shouldn't touch that.

THE CHAIRPERSON: That's okay.

SUBMISSIONS BY MS. LEPINE (#0249):

MS. LEPINE: My apologies. I'm also with the Mikasew
Cree, I'm Melody Lepine, L-E-P-I-N-E. I'm the director for the government and industry relations, so I work with Calvin.

I'm going to just elaborate a little bit about the costs associated with the Site C project. Referring to the cost to the Peace Athabaska Delta and the potential impacts to the Mikasew Cree.

So first of all, the first one, and this was a huge failure on BC Hydro's part as we were undergoing the environmental assessment process, the regulatory process, we were stressing the importance of an adequate environmental impact assessment to look at the downstream impacts, to look at the impacts to the Mikasew Cree, to our way of life, to our culture, to the ecological function of the delta, looking at the social impacts, looking at the ecosystem services, what sort of flow regimes and all of that.

So we were requesting a number of those things to be undertaken by BC Hydro. However, they were refused. So there is a cost because we do not understand what the full impacts to our delta are going to be. So we feel it is necessary to do the environmental impacts assessment and we can't say for sure what this cost will be, but we can say that if it requires all of the things that I listed as a few examples, then that would come, I think, as a huge
cost to understand what the impacts to the delta are and what the impacts to the Mikasew Cree are.

I will also touch on what usually happens after an assessment. So you usually monitor to test the predictions with the assessment findings. So with that, we undertake a small community-based monitoring program in the delta. It's very small in nature. It's funded by the Mikasew Cree, and it's about half a million dollars, as an example. But if we were to look at Site C and the costs of monitoring downstream along the Peace River within the delta, monitoring all of the impacts we see to fish, fish habitat, to the flow regimes to the perch basins, to navigation issues, because when water gets so low you can't navigate in the delta. So we have to test for water levels constantly, as well as when there are high levels of water, sometimes there's the influx of different contaminants that come down and sediments and things like that from runoff.

So we would request, you know, adequate monitoring and so there is a cost to that monitoring and I just wanted to give you that example of the community-based monitoring as a perspective of what the minimum cost would be.

The third one is modifications. So when you monitor and if there are to be -- if we find
something is wrong. So currently there is a couple of weirs in the delta. BC Hydro put them in a number of years ago to offset some of the costs from the Bennett dam. They walked away. They put their weirs in there and they've never maintained them. And so we would see a more active approach in modifying and ensuring the flow within the delta is occurring and we would ensure that, you know, any type of these modifications during operations, should bear costs. They have to be responsible for these downstream impacts and impacting a world heritage site and the outstanding universal values of this delta. So there should be these adaptive management approaches to fixing what they break and be held responsible in covering that cost.

The last one I will cover is the cost is less operational issues. So basically this one is if we find something wrong, and say it's quite significant like it has been for us with the Bennett dam. Well, there's a cost to BC Hydro for damages.

Proceeding Time 4:35 p.m. T06

What are the liabilities if they completely destroy a world heritage site? If they completely destroy the culture of the Mikisew Cree. So those are legal implications and huge costs for that. You know, there's probably examples around the world that hydroelectric projects are destroying, I'm sure,
downstream communities of such as our community, and so there should be, you know, costs associated with those damages.

Those are the main points that I wanted to reference. I spoke about, you know, we did stress the importance of all of these issues in our consultation and through the regulatory process with Site C. We were refused a proper assessment. We were refused any commitment to monitoring and dealing with the responsibility should there be impacts to the community. And so, you know, we'd like to thank you for the opportunity now to correcting what we see as fundamentally wrong.

THE CHAIRPERSON: Thank you, Ms. Lepine. A question please. So with regard to the downstream impact assessment, when you say you were refused, is it BC Hydro that refused to consider it? Is that what you mean?

MS. LEPINE: Yeah, the delta was not included in the environmental impact assessment.

THE CHAIRPERSON: Okay. And then it was scoped out at the environmental inquiry.

MS. LEPINE: We presented at a hearing in Peace River. That was the closest hearing to our community.

THE CHAIRPERSON: Right.

MS. LEPINE: He brought technical experts. Dr. Carver.
THE CHAIRPERSON: Yeah.

MS. LEPINE: One of the -- a very strong hydrologist who pointed out the flaws with their assessment and stressed the importance of including further reaches down the Peace River including the delta. And we had elders present as well their testimony, spoke about changes to the delta and the importance of the assessment because of declining water levels.

THE CHAIRPERSON: Right.

COMMISSIONER COTE: What reasons did they give?

MS. LEPINE: They basically, they took the same position that they always have for the past 30 something years, is we don't feel we are impacting you. You're too far away. And so therefore the potential impacts are negligible to none.

THE CHAIRPERSON: This is BC Hydro's position?

MS. LEPINE: Yes. So they went as far as I believe Peace Point on the Peace River. But we said, well, that doesn't even include the delta. The most important part of the assessment in our opinion was the delta because of the function of the delta. It needs water.

THE CHAIRPERSON: Mm-hmm, okay. Does anyone else have any questions? Thank you very much.

MS. LEPINE: You're welcome.

THE CHAIRPERSON: Thank you. We applicate your -- is
there some -- sorry.

VOICE: We have a short video with your indulgence and technical cooperation. We -- (inaudible)

THE CHAIRPERSON: I can guarantee our indulgence, I'm not sure about our technical ability here. We'll do what we can.

MS. LEPINE: I can explain the video. (inaudible) meeting with World Heritage Committee members at the World Heritage meetings, we felt that it was really important for them to understand the delta. And so the video is -- they were the audience, but we think it's appropriate for you to see first-hand sort of the issues from the community and seeing the water issues.

THE CHAIRPERSON: Thank you.

[Video plays]

THE CHAIRPERSON: Thank you.

Proceeding Time 4:48 p.m. T08

SUBMISSIONS BY MS. TUPPER (#0250):

MS. TUPPER: Hello? There we go. [non-English sentences] Yvonne Tupper, Treaty 8 territory, Saulteau First Nation. I am a visitor on the Coast Salish territories, Snuneymuxw, (inaudible). Thank you for having us, and thank you for allowing us to speak at your territory.

I am a member of the Treaty 8 nation, Saulteau First Nations, also a member of the Treaty 8
stewards of the lands. Can I get some help here?
This microphone is falling over.

And a participant of the Rocky Mountain
Fort Camp, a passenger and coordinator of the Treaty 8
Justice Caravan for the Peace.

Thank you.
THE CHAIRPERSON: Would you like to use the other mike?
Would that be easier?
MS. TUPPER: I'll check this out, and then maybe I'll go
back and forth.
THE CHAIRPERSON: Okay, yes.
MS. TUPPER: And a participant in the PADA for the Peace.
My grandmother, she was Cree and Métis, from
Saskatchewan. [non-English word] She was Cree. My
grandpa was British descent, and [non-English word]
was Cree and Beaver, Dene Za.

My mother's name is Yvonne Cochell, and my
father's name was Arthur Tupper, and my stepdad's
Willie Nome, and my daughter is Talisa. I've got
siblings, relatives, and my auntie, cousins -- too
many. I've got cousins all over and hence I was
really happy to see Steve Cottrell. I met him during
the Treaty 8 Justice for the Caravan.

I've got to ask you a question, and the
question is, is this consultation?
THE CHAIRPERSON: Well, we're -- sorry.
MS. TUPPER: Is this a form of consultation? Would you consider this consultation?

THE CHAIRPERSON: No, we wouldn't consider this consultation. We're gathering facts and evidence to answer the questions that we're asked for in the OIC. But it's my understanding that there may be additional consultation that would follow from this, which would be undertaken by government.

MS. TUPPER: Thank you. And thank you for giving an example of that to me as well.

As members of the Treaty 8 nation, Saulteau First Nations and member of the Treaty 8 stewards of the land and Rocky Mountain Fort, that was what we asked BC Hydro numerous times. We would want the B.C. Utilities Commission's review, and thank you for having this. And thank you for going to the communities across B.C., and continuing this, therefore.

I asked that because when -- as an active participant within my nation, our leaders would stand and say, when BC Hydro came, "This is not consultation." Just because they put pen to paper and they put in their travel claims and saying that they went to Saulteau, all of a sudden they call that consultation. When they came there with a set mind that they were going to build a dam, and not hear why
we were saying no to Site C for 50, 40, 30, 20, and even as recently as now, still saying no to Site C.

The repercussions of that is -- it's horrendous, or I wouldn't be standing here today if I wasn't taught by my grandparents to stand. And if we need to, I would teach my daughter and the future generations to stand for another 50 years against this mega-dam. We're prepared because the repercussions of this dam, and I echo whole-heartedly what my nation -- my brother nation here, Mikasew Cree, what they said. Standing, and their words about our livelihoods and our treaties, we share the same treaty, Treaty 8, and I'll echo the elders on the video.

Our elders told stories 50 years ago to the B.C. Utilities Commission's report. They also told their livelihood stories, and it was written down. And we cannot dismiss what they say. And my hand's out to the single mothers, single fathers, to the elders, who are raising children, who are trapping, hunting, and living off the land still to this day. Traveling from 1200 kilometers, which I met four of you in Fort St. John, to here to Victoria, it's a different kind of atmosphere.

If I was to say BC Hydro has many holes in their hide, you guys wouldn't know what it meant. But back home, that means that there's a lot of bullet
holes. Their hide is no good. We wouldn't buy that hide. We wouldn't trade that hide.

Proceeding Time 4:53 p.m. T09

But here, I guess that means a bad business plan. Bad business plan, because they don't have energy buyers currently for this mega-dam. Throughout these years, my 30-year fight against Site C, standing up with my grandparents and my mother and my generation, is that they still don't have current buyers for this energy plan. And that's a bad business. When you have a grandmother or a grandparent financially supporting a grandchild with a business that doesn't have buyers for energy, but wasting millions and billions of dollars, we call foul. That's a bad deal.

But also like I'm echoing Fort St. John, this also has ramifications and different effects. Health, mental health, our wellbeing, our livelihoods as treaty First Nations, in our region. We're considered sometimes a third-class poverty, below the poverty line. We have suicides, we have high traumas, we don't have policing. We don't have enough mental health workers or medical services currently in our bands, or social workers. And that's really scary because in my band we had a murder, and that's -- that's unheard of. And suicides, we had too many --
one too many suicides. One suicide is bad, but having many in one year, that's even worse.

And that concerns me because my understanding from this business complex is that my nations, or my brother nations, could sue BC Hydro for the effects of rescinding our Treaty 8 rights. But when you give our bands money, it escalates that high trauma by ten times, if not a hundred times. And I don't wish to see anybody else die. Especially by their own hands, or by the hands of their lovers.

I'm wearing a red skirt today. It was made by Roxanne Cachustus, in honour of murdered and missing women, indigenous women and girls. Saulteau First Nation, my band, recently lost -- this year, my cousin was killed by a hands of a man, and her 15-year-old daughter. And that man wasn't local. That man was coming to our region of northeast B.C., because a mega-project like Site C, and he was looking for a job. Because that's how attractive this mega-dam is.

And my concern, when I spoke at the Saulteau First Nations joint panel review hearing was, you're not even checking criminal records for these people who's coming to our community. You're not seeing if they're molesters, or rapists, or murderers, or drug dealing, or anything. You're allowing more
strangers, transient workers into our communities and you're thinking because you're providing jobs that's good enough. But what about our local people that need jobs too? And I don't like what I'm learning about this project, that too many of the workers there are not even local.

So, it's been years that my elders have been standing together, '60s, '70s, early '80s, '90s, with the government and knowing that they shelved this mega-project on -- the government shelved the project. And in 2000, the year 2000 wasn't even thought of, but 2010 they dusted off the shelf and it seems like every decade that's what they've been doing with this major project. We thought we won and defeated Site C in the 80s. That was very -- that was no more. And here it is, it's showing its ugly face again.

So we're -- I'm asking for that flood reserve where our region to be listed, that if this Site C is cancelled for the flood reserve to be listed to protect our micro-climate and our boreal forest. My ancestors' ancestral grounds, remains, and bones, my elders have joyful and fun memories of this place where I camped at Rocky Mountain Fort where the confluence of the Moberly River and the Peace River met. We need fresh water and fresh air, and there's abundance of medicines and fishing that Mikasew Cree,
that I echo too, that was in our nation. You can't mitigate poisoned fish.

You know, when I read the federal permit for this mega-project, they said that they're going to build a dam, but they're going to put a fish ladder so the fish could jump through the mega-dam. But first they're going to truck the fish around the dam, and then bring them back to the spawning areas where the Moberly River and -- and you can't sort poisoned fish. They wouldn't know which one is suspected with methylmercury or from the erosion of the soil.

**Proceeding Time 4:58 p.m. T10**

And it's just like -- it's a slow eco-cide. It's a slow genocide of our protein, of our food sources. And that concerns me too as well. It concerns a lot of us, actually, and our protein source -- sources of our moose, elk, and deer. Our calving grounds are in the middle of the island, to the Peace Island, and I invite anybody in this room to walk with me along the Peace River, and I'll show you. I'll talk to you and I'll show you what areas -- and why it's important to me personally, but to my family, to my nation, and to my neighbour nations.

I was asked today by a young guy because he -- I really liked this guy, so I wrote down his
question, because it's really good. He said, "Why aren't the Treaty 8 nations speaking out more?" When you wear a person down, of saying -- 50 years ago they said no. 40 years ago they said no. 30 years ago they said no. 20 years ago they said no. When you wear a person down and then say, "Oh, by the way, we're going to build it anyways, despite your 50 years of saying no to a mega-project," you're wearing down our elders. Unless that was the plan of BC Hydro, B.C. Liberals all along, is to wear us down.

And also too was I don't know more movement -- our elders -- they only want to say no once. They don't want to keep on saying no. So they're being silent at the moment, and a lot of members are being silent at the moment, because they don't stand up and speak. And I think -- well, today is an example. Two of our nations here are speaking today. It's because they're tired of being -- saying no. So please listen to their previous submissions from the other BCUC -- Utilities Commission's report.

And I also think when I was injunctioned from Rocky Mountain Fort, the BC Hydro lawyers, and I remember this quite -- because he was pretty dramatic, that lawyer. They had no right of being there. You have no human rights to be there, you have no treaty rights to be there. And yet my cousin said, all I
needed to do is show my Treaty 8 card and I should have been allowed on my territory. And especially with an environmental assessment that they gave us in Volume 5. It says I had every right to practice my ceremony, to gather, and to have ceremonies before they destroyed that valley forever. And I wasn't given the opportunity. Instead I got injunctioned by BC Hydro, and that's not fair.

We need justice for that river, and we need time to gather, and not that the project's going through, but I'm hoping that it doesn't.

So it's been a long journey and 30 minutes, or 20 minutes, doesn't give it enough justice. So I'm pleading for you, like we have been for the last two years, at different venues, with different people, and I'm very grateful for the people that showed up and stand up, is that we want justice for our river now. We want to be able to have that meaningful constitution with the component, and with each other, to say "Yes, we value this river."

My boyfriend and I have been hunting for the last three months, and we went hundreds of kilometres, and we got no luck. We had no moose. And that concerns me and him. He's a trained hunter, he's instinctively -- like many young hunters, they know to hunt before winter-time, to feed many -- one moose
could feed up to four families. And it's pretty sad that with the current destruction -- sorry. With Site C's construction site, going 24 hours 7 with the noise and the lights on, and it's a migratory corridor. There's big signs all over saying that it is, and we know that as First Nations people our moose is not crossing that river. The moose is staying on one side, on the northeast, and on the other side of the South Peace. Well, even with the South Peace it's not really -- they're not really coming around. And that concerns us because of the protein sources, and also too is because we need that protein to offset -- the opposite of diabetes. We need that protein.

And that concerns me, as a First Nations person, because as the Treaty 8 does say that as long as the sun shines, the river flows and grass grows, I have every right to live as my ancestors did, and so does everybody else who belongs to the Treaty 8 nations. And that river, even though it's flowing, it's also infringing the animals' movement, and also the bears in that area too as well.

And the birds and the fish. They -- you guys heard it all. I'm sure you guys did. And I know I'm repeating a lot, and echoing what a lot of people have said. And my request for solutions is upon cancelling the project, maybe use that $1 billion for
our health services in the northeast.

Proceeding Time 5:03 p.m. T11

We are the bread basket of British Columbia. We provide oil, gas, mining, forestry. A lot of industry products come from our neck of the woods, and if some of that money could come back for our health professionals, our mental health workers, social workers and doctors, our schools, our highways, a lot of that money could be put back into our communities and to help us. We don't have many roads here like Victoria to get to one venue. We only have two roads, two highways maybe, and those highways got potholes. I think you guys experienced it when you're in Fort St. John, potholes and construction that's needed and stuff, and the weathering.

So that's it for now. Thank you so much for listening.

THE CHAIRPERSON: Thanks, Ms. Tupper, thanks for coming.

On that note, thank you very much to all of you who spoke, and we will take all of your comments into consideration, thank you. And thanks everyone also who joined us in the audience too.

I'll wish you a good evening, and for those of you that are going to stay we'll be back at 6 o'clock for a community input session. Thank you.

(PROCEEDINGS ADJOURNED AT 5:04 P.M.)
I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THE FORGOING
is a true and accurate transcript
of the proceedings herein, to the
best of my skill and ability.

A.B. Lanigan, Court Reporter

October 12th, 2017