

**From:** [Marie PEDERSEN](#)  
**To:** [Site C Submissions BCUC:EX](#)  
**Subject:** A Conversation with former Peace river North MLA Ed Smith. Unplugged from the "Party Line"  
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To whom it may concern this is a submission to consider for the BCUC Site C inquiry.

Former Peace River North MLA Ed Smith disconnects the "Party Line" and Speaks about Site C.

My name is Esther Pedersen.

I would like to recognize that we are standing here today on Treaty 8 Territory. Our farm is directly above the proposed Site C dam worksite. We are one of, if not the, closest residents to the work site.

As a landowner 5 mins was not enough time to say what I have to say about the project and of living with the noise, blasting vibrations, dust and light disturbances we've lived with and the Costs associated with that torment 24/7 for the past 2+ years. So I have written a seperate submission to discuss that aspect of the Project. In this submission, I would like to share a conversation that was had, between my Husband Poul Pedersen, myself (Esther Pedersen) and a long term resident of the Peace, about this project in about the year 2000.

My Husband used to swim at noon hours here in Fort St John. While he swam I went shopping. Upon my return I found Poul sitting at a table in the pool foyer with an elderly man.

I sat down to join them and Poul introduced the gentleman as Ed Smith the former MLA for Peace River North, from 1966 to 1979. Poul's Father was a lifetime Social Credit Party Member and Ed became a family friend via that political association, and knew Poul well.

Ed asked, " So, Poul what have you been up to?"

Poul answered, "Well we've sold the cows and quota and we're building a house out on the heifer Pasture on the banks of the Peace. Right where the Old Beatton homestead used to be. "

Ed Smith said, "Oh,? That is just about where we thought about building the dam back in the 80's"

Poul asked, "Oh really? So, Why did they not build the dam?"

Ed Smith gave this reply. "Firstly I want to say that I was NOT in favour of building that dam, I felt that the loss of that Valley far out weighed any benefit from generating power by flooding it for another dam. However, despite all the protests that were

heard, had the gov't of the day decided to build that dam they would have.

We sent the projects proposal to the BCUC for scrutiny to be sure it was a good investment for BC taxpayers. After 2 years of deliberation, their reports came back and within them were several reasons they recommended Not to proceed.

1st there was strong pushback from Alberta's 1st Nations People and Parks Canada because of the permanent damages to the Athabasca Delta and the eco system of Wood Buffalo National Park.

2nd, as the Dam was designed there was not enough fill to Build the dam, without hauling it in here at a great expense which would have increased the predicted cost of the dam. A third reason was that the Peace River is (was) a federally protected waterway, from Hudson's Hope to the Athabasca Delta and we had a lot of pushback from the federal gov't about putting a 3rd dam within its protected length."

We did not know what Federally protected River was so Poul asked, "What is a Federally protected river?"

Ed Smith replied, "In Canada, the Federal gov't has given certain waterways a protected status that disallows any developments that alter their course or how they are naturally found. These waterways have been set aside as part of Canada's History, that future generations might be able to traverse them, as our 1st explorers did, to learn about how Canada was discovered and opened up for settlement."

Ed continued, " Another reason not to proceed was the cost. At an estimated 3.6 billion \$\$ this would be the most expensive project to date. At the time there was no real forecasted need for power and the BCUC suggested we look at alternative ways to generate power such as inexpensive and abundant Natural gas, solar and geothermal energy, that may have been a less costly alternative to the dam. It was felt that over the lifetime of the project for its estimated cost, that British Columbians would not ever see a return on their investment.

However, in the end the reason we did not proceed with the project was that BC Hydro's geologists could not guarantee a stable structure at their chosen site. You see" Ed said, "with the 1st 2 dams we had solid bedrock to anchor those dams to. However, with Site C, at the site chosen there was no solid rock found to anchor the dam to. So because of stability questions of the dam at the chosen site, we (the Social credit Party) decided NOT to proceed with the project and it was shelved"

This conversation took place when we had retired from full time Dairy farming ourselves and were in a transitional time of our lives. Building our dream home and Horse facility on a piece of the original Dairy Farm. Out on the banks of the Peace. We had no idea about the Dam then, nor that the custom cedar home we were building and prime River view farmland, would ever be in danger of being lost to us because of a Dam. We had applied to the Peace River Regional District for a permit to build and deposite 1980's maps showing the Stability lines for the dam's approval then, we were granted permit to build on our chosen site without mention of possible loss to this project. Indeed, even after this conervation, which was just that, we were not concerned about our home's location because who would ever think the project

would ever be considered to build.

As you can see it is not ONLY money that will stop this project. In the end the River itself will be its demise.

Since this project started in 2015, we have seen the River give gentle warnings of things, that have been recorded/predicted in expert reports for over 35 years, with the BCUC, will come and that is the instability of the site, which cannot be coerced to change.

35 years ago, a political leader who was serving the people who elected him, made a wise decision that was in the best interest of BC tax/ratepayers. The answers to the same questions are still valid today.

We would say that the same answer be given today, that the project Not go ahead and progress halted immediately.

Although they have changed the design, found fill that will be transported above ground through a subdivision of small suburb acreages, 24/7 for years, and Stephen Harper lifted the protections of our Heritage Waterways put in place by our current Prime Minister's father, the actual reasons NOT to proceed are the same today. Vast environmental damages to the river Valley, our largest National Park's eco system, a designated UNESCO World heritage site the Athabasca Delta, disturbance beyond mitigation of Wildlife migration routes and 1st Nation's Sacred and Treated lands. It is a cost prohibitive project that may never see a cent of return for BC tax/ratepayers investment and the North Bank is not stable enough to hold back a dam.

We say Stop wasting taxpayers \$\$ and Halt it now.

Thank You. Poul and Esther Pedersen.