

02.10.20

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Mr. Ted Olynyk
Communications and Consultation Task Manager
Vancouver Island Generation Project
Georgia Strait Crossing Project
BC Hydro
6911 South Point Drive
Burnaby, BC V3N 4X8

RE: Duke Point Electrical Power Generating Proposal

Dear Mr. Olynyk,

My wife and I own acreage on Quennell Lake at the end of Graham Road off Yellowpoint Road. I am not certain but I estimate that we are between five and ten kilometers away from the site of the proposed generating plant.

I have been considering my position regarding this project since it was first announced and have come to the conclusion that at this time the plant should not proceed. I have arrived at this viewpoint because I believe that, 1) the business plan and rational is flawed, 2) the overall cost is not well defined or open to scrutiny and, most importantly, 3) the detrimental impact upon our environment and public health is not fully understood either by BC Hydro or anyone else for that matter.

This is not the time for a “damn the critics, full speed ahead” approach. The unintended consequences may be too costly and damaging to us all. If you personally knew with certainty that this project would be proven to contribute to the ill health of your family would you want it to proceed? Of course not, and I believe that you would not want it for anyone else either. The fact is that at this time no one can be certain that this plant will not be a source of ill health for citizens of British Columbia. I believe that in the future we may know exactly how plants such as this contribute to the degradation of the environment and health of our citizens. Common sense tells us that the more particulate matter we dump into the air the more we are at risk.

The comparison with smoking cigarettes is relevant. Not only is smoking dangerous for those who smoke we now know that it is also dangerous for those who don't smoke.

If Hydro had the science to prove the proposal's benign impact I would be supportive, but it doesn't. There remain many unanswered questions regarding the impact of environmental contaminants affecting the health of children, adults and seniors. Because there are so many unanswered questions it is only logical as well as prudent that we do not proceed until we are certain of the consequences. Unfortunately Hydro seems intent upon denying the validity of the questions instead of working to provide the answers.

We need electrical power Mr. Olynyk, but not in a manner of delivery that risks the health of our citizens. I think Hydro is creating a significant health risk with this plant and I am asking that it re-consider. Like everyone else I am not self destructive nor do I wish to freeze in the dark, I simply am not convinced that Hydro's plan is the best alternative to achieve our goals.

Regrettably I have found some of Hydro's answers evasive, self-serving and at times condescending. I believe this is no indication of anything personal and I understand it because it is a difficult and frustrating job you have at the moment. However, as a result of Hydro's attitude and evasiveness I have the distinct impression that it does not have the answers to many of the questions pertaining to the environmental and health issues being asked by rightfully concerned citizens.

- How has BC Hydro made its business plan open and available for our review?
- Why can't we be absolutely certain that there will be no negative impact from the effluent of this plant before we build it?
- What are the options, costs and environmental implications of the other plans has Hydro considered and decided not to pursue?
- If the costs of the new gas pipeline have risen as dramatically as reported, how is it possible that the business plan remains valid? In my experience projects budget for overruns but not to the extent reported without causing a total re-appraisal of the plan.
- What is the economic threshold for your plan after which you will be forced to consider other options?
- Why does BC Hydro believe that the risks to our health and the environment are outweighed by the possibility of power shortages in the near future?
- On such a critical issue as our future energy system why does Hydro seem to prefer to fight with it's customers rather than to work with them?

I fully appreciate that you and your associates at BC Hydro are charged with the onerous responsibility of providing all of us with power. I also appreciate your dedication to that objective; what I cannot appreciate is your insistence upon forcing a solution upon us without being able to convince us of its validity. In addition, it is apparent that Hydro believes it is the only one able to comprehend the import and gravitas of this enterprise. I judge that Hydro is acting like a bully and is abusing its public trust and position of responsibility.

In my experience when engineers and creative people are forced to think within the constricts of conventional boundaries, the results are functional at best and often represent a missed opportunity. When the same people are given the challenge to be creative, to take calculated risks, and most importantly to seek solutions that enhance our quality of life, the results usually add immensely to the human experience. Future generations benefit from such leadership, unfortunately they also suffer immensely when it is absent. As you well know, there is more to the issue of preventing brown outs than simply preventing brown outs. We need to show leadership today similar to that our forefathers demonstrated when they first created BC Hydro. We need to help BC Hydro rise to the challenge of creating an environmentally sensitive, sustainable and health safe system of providing electricity that meets our present and future requirements.

Mr. Olynyk, burning fossil fuels is not the answer.

I realize if Hydro chooses to do so, it can create excellent results, however if it continues to follow the current path I also have no doubt that we may all suffer and some will suffer more than others.

Thank you for your time and effort, I have no doubt about your good intentions.

Sincerely,

Brian Bancroft B.Arch.

Cc Larry Bell, CEO & Chairman of the Board BC Hydro
Mr. Mike Hunter, MLA
Hon. Richard Neufeld
City of Nanaimo Mayor and Council
Regional District of Nanaimo
Environmental Assessment Office