

Vouriot, Melody EAO:EX

From: Carder, Judith EAO:EX
Sent: October 22, 2002 12:37 PM
To: Melody Vouriot
Subject: VIGP - CLIFF #90395
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-----Original Message-----

From: Paul Grignon [mailto:pgrignon@island.net]
Sent: October 21, 2002 1:10 PM
To: Thoroughgood, Garth A EAO:EX
Subject: submission re VIGP gas plant

Garth Thoroughgood, Project Assessment Coordinator
Environmental Assessment Office
PO Box 9426 - Stn Prov Govt
Victoria, B.C. V8W 9V1

Dear Sir,

As webmaster for the Nanaimo Citizens Organizing Committee (ncoc.info), I have seen all the arguments for and against this gas plant. I have picked and chosen from what is available and have created a website that I believe accurately reflects the concerns of our core group, the hundreds who have come to our events and the thousands who signed our petitions. I submit the entire website, including all linked documents and linked external websites as part of this submission.

I have also video taped Project Manager Lachlan Russel telling the Roundtable group on Gabriola that this is a ³committed project² and making it very clear to us that the only input we had was suggestions on how to make the gas plant better, not whether we wanted it at all. I have provided that tape to Committee member Gail Lund.

Hydro claims that the project is driven by government and government claims the opposite. If neither are driving it why hasn't it stopped? Some will see this as an example of ³mindless bureaucracy² or ³inertia² but if it isn't wanted by most of the public, and isn't being driven by either government or Hydro then the motive force must come from somewhere. I suggest to you that your decision must be put on hold until the BC Energy Task Force report is made public, because then it will be obvious to everyone in the province who is driving this natural gas strategy: the global energy corporations who in large part paid for the Liberals¹ (and G.W. Bush's) election.

The draft version of that report makes it very clear that the goal is to accelerate development of the fossil fuel resources of the province, including coal. Also expressly promoted is deregulation of electricity so that private industry can burn these fuels here and export the electricity to the US. While domestic consumers get a minimum 30 to 60% rate increase! The report also recommends that Hydro be split into separate divisions and ³marketized², ie. prepared for sale.

I can only hope that you, as fellow citizens and especially as employees of British Columbia, will accept your full civic responsibility for the task entrusted to you rather than use the ready made excuse of your limited mandate¹ before signing off on your part of this corporate greed and global warming agenda.

We can embrace fundamental change or we can fight it until it forces itself upon us. Which is the more pleasant and productive experience?

Fossil fuels cause global warming, are in finite supply and near the point of declining supply. Why would we want to make ourselves hostage to this situation by making ourselves even more dependent on them?

And more powerlessly in the grip of ruthless corporations of global reach?

What we need first and foremost is an honest acceptance of the need for fundamental change and a commitment to do it right and for the common survival of all life on Earth. Nothing less is at stake.

In light of the facts we know today (those that conform to the the First and Second Laws of Thermodynamics), we have virtually no other option but to reduce our energy consumption to what is sustainable after the fossil fuels are gone or before climate change destroys life as we know it. Failing to admit to and face these challenges head on means changes will more likely be catastrophic rather than adaptive.

Clearly what is needed is an independent inventory of ALL sustainable energy resources in the province and an Integrated Resource Plan that commits to adding only green energy resources to the existing hydro base, managing demand aggressively to stay within what is sustainable ad infinitum.

Demand management and sustainable alternatives have been shown logically and by experience in Europe, to create far more employment than burning fossil fuels. And these are permanent jobs, not the boom and bust cycle of resource extraction.

Thus I submit to you the greatest socioeconomic impact of the proposed VIGP gas plant is that it is part of a plan driven by the fossil-fuel industry, that guarantees the further profits and power of that industry while it diverts financial resources away from sustainable green economic opportunities and the one sensible course necessary for long term planetary survival!

I do not consider there to have been any meaningful public consultation on this project because the actual context of this project, increasing energy exports to the US, has not only not been addressed by the proponent, it has been vehemently denied.

My socioeconomic impact question here is:

What happens to local customers if, in step with the policies advocated in the Energy Task Force Report, this gas plant is sold to a private corporation, and, after market deregulation, that private corporation is free to charge whatever it can get for its power, and sell it anywhere on the continent? Would local energy consumers have to bid against the rest of North America for the energy produced in their own backyards? The exhaust of which they are condemned to breathe?

Hydro must not be allowed to hide behind the smokescreen that ³the Final Energy Task Force Report isn't out². Does Hydro want us to believe that makes it irrelevant? It's not out yet because the government wants to take irreversible action **before** the policies behind these actions can be officially raised for public debate They know an informed BC public will not support them.

I insist that this project not go forward without a BC Utilities Commission Review or an equivalent examination in light of the contents of the Final Energy Task Force Report

For specific concerns about the plant, I endorse the excellent and detailed submissions by Sheila Malcolmson on the deficiencies in the consultation process and the socioeconomic impact, Iain Cuthbert on air pollution, aquatic health and greenhouse gas emissions, Jim Parr on water supply and emissions standards, John Gambrell on air pollution and water collection, Bob McKechnie's engineers group on the inadequate proof of need and a myriad of other points, Norman Abbey on the similar theme of ³opportunity loss², Dyane Brown on the failures of the consultation process and other concerns, and the SENES report on flaws in VIGP's air quality modelling.

Please do not sign off on your part of this ³done deal².

Call for, at minimum, BC Utilities Commission review, a Public Hearing, and a Stage 2 Review before any EAO approval is granted.

Sincerely,
Paul Grignon
2525 Coho Drive, Gabriola BC, V0R 1X7
250 247 8350
pgrignon@island.net