

Environmental Assessment of the Proposed Bute Inlet Hydroelectric Project

Public Comment Period and Open House

Plutonic Hydro Inc. (the proponent) is proposing to construct the Bute Inlet Hydroelectric Project (the project). The project would consist of 17 run-of-river hydroelectric facilities in the vicinity of Bute Inlet. Major components include 17 run-of-river generating facilities, a 230 kV/500 kV substation near the mouth of Southgate River, associated access roads and ancillary works, 216 km of 230 kV collector transmission line and 227 km of 500 kV trunk transmission line from the proposed substation near the mouth of Southgate River to the existing BCTC 500 kV substation at Malaspina. The project would have the capacity to produce 1027 MW of electricity.

The Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency (the Agency) and the B.C. Environmental Assessment Office (EAO) are collaborating on their respective federal and provincial environmental assessment processes and are seeking public comments on two key documents.

1. Draft federal-provincial Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) Guidelines/Application Terms of Reference (the Guidelines)

This joint federal-provincial document specifies the studies to be conducted and the detailed information to be provided by the proponent in order to meet the federal criteria for producing a proper environmental impact statement (EIS) and the provincial criteria for filing an application for an environmental assessment certificate (the application).

An EIS is a statement of the anticipated environmental effects of the project that will be submitted by the proponent to the federal review panel, if appointed. The guidelines identify the issues the proponent will be required to address in its EIS.

The proponent must obtain an environmental assessment certificate from the EAO before any work can be undertaken on the project. However, prior to submission of an application by the proponent, the EAO must first approve the guidelines, which outlines the information to be provided by the proponent in its application.

The intention of seeking public comments on the guidelines is to ensure that all potential effects – environmental, economic, social, heritage and health – that might result from the project are identified as part of the assessment process.

2. Terms of Reference for establishing a federal review panel

In the event of a referral of the environmental assessment to a federal review panel, terms of reference would be required and have been drafted. The document establishes the mandate and authority of the federal review panel, its composition and the process and procedures for conducting the review.

The Comment Period

The 30-day comment period on both documents will begin on January 19, 2009, and end at midnight (PST) on February 18, 2009. After taking public comments into account, the Agency and the EAO will finalize the guidelines, issue them to the proponent and make them

available to the public. The federal terms of reference for establishing a review panel, if appointed, would also be finalized by Canada's Environment Minister and made public following the consultation.

Please forward written comments to:

Comments on the guidelines or on the terms of reference for establishing a federal review panel	Comments on the guidelines
Marie-France Therrien Panel Manager Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency 160 Elgin Street, 22nd Floor Ottawa ON K1A 0H3 Fax: 613-957-0941 bute.review@ceaa-acee.gc.ca	Kathy Eichenberger Project Assessment Director Environmental Assessment Office PO Box 9426 Stn Prov Govt Victoria, B.C. V8W 9V1 Fax 250-387-2208 eaoinfo@gov.bc.ca

Electronic copies of both documents will be available on January 19, 2009, online at www.ceaa-acee.gc.ca and www.eao.gov.bc.ca. Copies of the documents will also be available for viewing at these locations:

Powell River Public Library 4411 Michigan Avenue Powell River, BC
Sechelt Public Library 5797 Cownie Street Sechelt, BC
Campbell River Public Library 1240 Shopper's Road Campbell River, BC

Public Open Houses

In order to provide information about both documents and to receive comments from the public, the Agency and the EAO invite the public to attend an Open House. There will be two Open Houses to be held as follows:

at: Powell River Town Centre
4660 Joyce Avenue, Powell River, BC
on: Tuesday, January 27, 2009
from: 4:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

and

at: Sechelt Indian Band Hall
5432 Xenichen Avenue, Sechelt, BC
on: Wednesday, January 28, 2009
from: 4:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

and

at: Quinsam Centre
2005 Eagle Drive, Campbell River, BC
on: Monday, February 2, 2009
from: 4:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Open houses will include presentations with an opportunity to ask questions.

NOTE: All submissions received by the Agency and the EAO regarding this project are considered public and will be posted to the Agency and EAO websites. If you do not want to have your address and/or email address and telephone number posted to the EAO website, please indicate this with your comments.