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## INFORMATION BULLETIN

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Ministry of Environment  
Environmental Assessment Office

### **Site C project granted environmental assessment approval**

VICTORIA – Environment Minister Mary Polak and Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations Minister Steve Thomson have issued an environmental assessment certificate to BC Hydro for the Site C Clean Energy project, located seven kilometres southwest of Fort St. John.

The ministers decided that Site C is in the public interest and that the benefits provided by the project outweigh the risks of significant adverse environmental, social and heritage effects.

The ministers made the decision after considering a co-operative environmental assessment with the federal government that included a joint review panel. The environmental assessment included consultation with and input from Aboriginal groups, government agencies, communities and the public.

The environmental assessment process provided meaningful consultation with Aboriginal groups to understand the potential impacts of Site C on Aboriginal interests and to develop substantive accommodation measures that will avoid, mitigate or offset those potential impacts.

The Province must still decide whether to proceed with the project based on an investment decision. Should the project proceed, the Environmental Assessment Office, consistent with its compliance and enforcement program, will co-ordinate compliance management efforts with other government agencies to ensure that the office is satisfied that certificate conditions are met. In addition, BC Hydro would be required to obtain a variety of provincial permits, through a process co-ordinated and led by the Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations.

The ministers issued the certificate with 77 legally-binding conditions that BC Hydro must meet to be in compliance, including:

- Establish a fund of \$20 million to compensate for lost agricultural lands and activities. The funds will be used to support enhancement projects that improve agricultural land, productivity or systems;
- Develop a Wetland Mitigation and Compensation Plan and monitor construction and operation activities that could cause changes in wetland function;
- Develop an Aboriginal Business Participation Strategy to maximize opportunities for Aboriginal businesses;
- Implement on-site health care with physician and nursing services to manage non-urgent issues for the workforce residing in camps;
- Develop protocols for application of construction methods, equipment, material and timing of activities to mitigate adverse effects to wildlife and wildlife habitat;

- Build 50 rental units in Fort St. John, of which 40 will be used for BC Hydro housing and 10 will be available for low-to-moderate income households. Upon completion of the construction phase, the 40 worker housing units will be made available to low-to-moderate income households;
- In collaboration with a Cultural and Heritage Resources Committee that includes Aboriginal groups, develop and implement mitigation measures to manage effects on cultural resources;
- Design the installation and use of a trap-and-haul facility as part of a fish passage management plan;
- Establish three new boat launch/day use sites and provide approximately \$200,000 for a Community Recreation Site Fund; and
- Monitor greenhouse gas emissions from the reservoir for the first ten years of operations as part of a Greenhouse Gases Monitoring and Follow-up Program.

The \$7.9-billion Site C project would be a third dam and hydroelectric generating station on the Peace River in northeast B.C. It would provide 1,100 megawatts of capacity and produce about 5,100 gigawatt hours of electricity each year – enough to power the equivalent of about 450,000 homes per year.

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