
INFORMATION BULLETIN

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Ministry of Environment

NORTHWEST TRANSMISSION LINE PROJECT APPROVED

VICTORIA – British Columbia Hydro and Power Authority (BC Hydro) has received an environmental assessment certificate for the proposed Northwest Transmission Line project.

Environment Minister Murray Coell and Forests, Mines and Lands Minister Pat Bell made the decision to grant the environmental assessment certificate after considering the review led by B.C.'s Environmental Assessment Office (EAO).

The proposed \$404-million project includes a new 287-kilovolt transmission line, 344-kilometres from the existing Skeena substation south of Terrace to a new substation near Bob Quinn Lake. The project would include new access roads, an upgrade to the existing Skeena substation and construction of the new Bob Quinn substation, which would incorporate 287-kilovolt line terminations and related equipment.

Local and provincial taxes generated over the lifespan of the project will be approximately \$97 million including provincial commodity taxes (\$10.9 million), personal taxes (\$9.6 million), corporate taxes (\$1.7 million) and property taxes (\$75 million) paid to local government. The three-year construction phase is expected to generate an average of 860 person-years of full-time direct employment. The operational phase of the project is expected to generate more than 36 person-years of employment over the life of the project.

The EAO assessment report concluded the project is not likely to have significant adverse effects, based on the mitigation measures and commitments included as conditions of the environmental assessment certificate.

The provincial environmental assessment certificate contains 71 commitments the proponent must implement throughout various stages of the project. Key commitments include the following:

- BC Hydro, in consultation with First Nations, the Nisga'a Nation and Fisheries and Oceans Canada, must develop and implement a fish habitat compensation plan and a wetland compensation plan.
- During the boundary-marking exercise for the final alignment, BC Hydro must ensure that surveys are conducted to identify game trails, bear wallows, mineral licks, watercourses, swamps, wetlands and red and blue listed plant communities.
- BC Hydro will contribute to ground-based moose surveys and aerial moose and goat surveys.
- BC Hydro must develop and implement an environmental monitoring program.

- BC Hydro will provide First Nations and the Nisga'a Nation with an opportunity to provide a cultural monitor and/or site-specific cultural information for areas to be excavated.

The project also triggered an environmental assessment under the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act. Under the Canada-British Columbia Environmental Delegation Agreement, dated Nov. 6, 2010, the federal environmental assessment was delegated to the EAO pursuant to subsection 17(1) of the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act. The EAO prepared a joint assessment report/screening report for decision-makers. Based on this report, the EAO has concluded that effects from the project are not significant, subject to implementation of mitigation measures and commitments agreed to by the proponent.

Before the project can proceed, the proponent will still need to obtain the necessary provincial licences, leases and other approvals.

The Metlakatla, Kitsumkalum, Kitselas and Lax Kw'alaams First Nations; Tahltan Nation; Gitksan Hereditary Chiefs of wilp Tenim Gyet, wilp Wii Hlengwax, wilp Lelt and wilp Skii km Lax Ha; Gitanyow Hereditary Chiefs of wilp Watakhayetsx, wilp Gamlaxyeltxw, wilp Wii'litsxw and wilp Malii; and the Nisga'a Nation were consulted on the assessment. The Province is satisfied the Crown's duties to consult and accommodate First Nations interests and the Nisga'a Nation's treaty interests have been discharged as they relate to the decision to grant the environmental assessment certificate.

More information on the environmental assessment certificate can be found at:
www.eao.gov.bc.ca

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