

Kokish River Hydroelectric Project

KEY THEME SUMMARY - Port McNeill Stakeholder Meetings

A total of 23 people attended two stakeholder meetings held in Port McNeill on Tuesday, April 22, 2008. The following is a summary of key themes from the meetings:

IMPACTS TO FISH POPULATIONS

- Many participants expressed concern regarding the potential impacts of the project on fish populations (8 participants).
- A few participants expressed concern about the ability to prevent small fish from being drawn into the intake pipe. They stated that they were unaware of any examples of screens that functioned effectively under all flow conditions (2).
- A few participants asked for a guarantee that fish in the diversion section of the river between the intake and tailrace will have enough water (3).
- A few participants were concerned about impacts to specific fish species (e.g., coho versus steelhead). It was noted that changes that benefit one species can be detrimental to another species (2).
- A few participants identified an issue regarding MoE's practice of allocating funds to promote conservation and protection of steelhead versus salmon populations – this was seen as a provincial versus a federal government issue. It was suggested that the Proponent meet with MoE and DFO to discuss modification of the selective barrier at the km 11 falls to allow upstream passage of coho and other salmon (2).
- A few participants expressed concern about impacts to the environment, particularly to salmon, and wanted to see this addressed (3).

LOCAL IMPACTS/BENEFITS

- A number of participants expressed support for the project and stated that they would like to see it proceed (11).
- Several participants wanted to know if the project would be able to meet local energy needs and expressed concern regarding the frequency and duration of power outages in the region due to recurrent problems with the existing transmission system (4).

- Several participants wanted to know how plant operations would vary throughout the year with respect to the amount of water to be withdrawn from the river (5).
- A few participants would like to see long-term economic benefits for their region (2) and several participants stated that they wanted the benefits to remain in the North Island area (i.e., jobs for First Nations) (5).

ENERGY ALTERNATIVES

- A few participants questioned what other energy alternatives were available on the North Island and made specific reference to potential wind and tidal power opportunities in the area (2).

PROJECT APPROVAL PROCESS

- Several participants wanted to know how this project would proceed given the difficulties that have been encountered in the past with respect to previous hydroelectric project proposals on the Kokish River (3).
- A few participants asked for clarification regarding the specifics of the pre-application/application phases of the federal/provincial harmonized environmental assessment (EA) process (2).
- Several participants raised questions regarding the involvement of the 'Namgis. It was stated that the partnership between business and First Nations was encouraging (4).
- A few participants would like to ensure a transparent process (i.e., ensure all documents are posted on the project website) (2).

CONSTRUCTION/OPERATION

- A few participants enquired about the BC Hydro Clean Call for Power process and the potential terms of any Energy Purchase Agreement between Kwagis Power and BC Hydro (3).
- Several participants asked for specific information regarding project design, including costs, for project elements such as the transmission line and pipeline (4).