



Chiefs demand BC Hydro held Accountable for “Above the Law” Tactics on Site C

Fort St. John, British Columbia (June 22, 2016) – Chief Lynette Tsakoza of Prophet River First Nation and Chief Roland Willson of West Moberly First Nations are outraged over the tactics of BC Hydro regarding the Site C project that the Province of British Columbia is attempting to build on the Peace River.

BC Hydro recently applied for a permit to extricate aquatic wildlife from a location along the Peace River because it wants to remove the water. According to BC Hydro, however, it “cannot wait until the permit is issued” and, by extension, cannot wait for the Province to fulfil its legal obligations to the First Nations and the general public.

“Forget environmental laws. Forget constitutional rights. Forget everything that holds our society together. That’s what BC Hydro is demanding we all do”, says Chief Willson. “What infuriates me”, Chief Willson went on to state, “ is that the Province has agreed to ignore the laws and instead protect the selfish interests of BC Hydro”.

“It’s a pattern”, Chief Tsakoza states. “It’s a pattern that began years ago with BC Hydro violating the law by destroying cultural artefacts simply to fast-track Site C. Every other company would face charges, but not BC Hydro. The Province refused to lay any charges. Now, and only because of their own poor planning, BC Hydro is refusing to wait for its permits and will break the law again. And the Province is right there letting it happen yet again”.

“BC Hydro has gone rogue”, says Chief Willson. “Worse yet”, he notes, “the Province is aware of the situation and chooses to look the other way. What’s the point of having a regulator if it refuses to regulate?” Additionally, Chief Tsakoza posits, “if the regulators were truly unbiased, then why is the Province afraid of having the British Columbia Utilities Commission involved. Is it because the Commission would actually protect ratepayers and not the self-interests of BC Hydro? I think so”.

Both Chiefs were quick to point to a legal contract they have with the Province that deals with permits relating to wildlife. The problem, Chief Willson states, is that “the Province is knowingly ignoring their legal responsibilities to consult and accommodate our rights; that agreement has been violated hundreds and hundreds of times”. Further, Chief Tsakoza adds, “contracts supposed to matter, but the Province seems intent on breaching any and all agreements it has to push through an unjustified project that violates our Treaty rights and ignores environmental laws”.

For more information:

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