

BCGEU stands with First Nations to oppose Site C dam

"When a government refuses to consider alternative energy sources, sidelines its own utilities commission, ignores environmental concerns and Aboriginal People's constitutional rights, citizens have a responsibility to speak out." — Stephanie Smith, BCGEU President

Vancouver (27 July 2015) — The B.C. Government and Service Employees' Union (BCGEU/NUPGE) is joining First Nations and environmental advocates in opposing the B.C. government's approval of the Site C dam project, the union has announced.

There are better alternatives

"Site C is the wrong choice for British Columbia. The project is not needed: there are better alternatives," says BCGEU President Stephanie Smith. "Site C will cause massive habitat loss. It violates First Nations' indigenous rights. It removes high-value agricultural lands from production."

"The BCGEU supports the Treaty 8 First Nations, who are challenging the project in federal court. Site C would have a negative impact on their traditional use of the land and would destroy traditional First Nations burial sites."

Dam is poor investment

Site C fails the economic test of providing a lasting net benefit to British Columbians. A recent report by energy analyst Robert McCullough notes that the dam would cost twice as much as alternative energy options like renewables and natural gas generation.

The joint review panel also concluded that the government "has not fully demonstrated the need for the project on the timetable set forth."

Lack of consultation

“There’s been a shocking lack of public consultation on the Site C dam,” says Smith. “The B.C. government has refused to allow the B.C. Utility Commission to review the project, and no effort has been made by this government to consider other sustainable energy sources.

“When a government refuses to consider alternative energy sources, sidelines its own utilities commission, ignores environmental concerns and Aboriginal People’s constitutional rights, citizens have a responsibility to speak out. The BCGEU/NUPGE is proud to lend our voice to the growing chorus of British Columbians who say no to this ill-considered project.”

UNESCO call for delay of dam sites

The BCGEU announcement on Site C follows a recent call by UNESCO World Heritage Committee for the Canadian government to delay development of dam sites until an environmental assessment of its impact on Wood Buffalo National Park can be done. The park was declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1983.

NUPGE

The National Union of Public and General Employees (NUPGE) is one of Canada's largest labour organizations with over 360,000 members. Our mission is to improve the lives of working families and to build a stronger Canada by ensuring our common wealth is used for the common good. *NUPGE*

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