

Scrapping Site C and developing wind and solar could save billions, analyst says

Says B.C. doesn't need all Site C's power, other options cheaper, export market will not materialize

By Liam Britten, [CBC News](#) Posted: Oct 13, 2017 6:06 PM PT Last Updated: Oct 13, 2017 6:06 PM PT

Scrapping the Site C Dam project and aggressively pursuing wind power could save B.C. between \$2 and \$4.4 billion according to an energy analyst hired by the Peace Valley Landowners Association, which opposes the project.

Robert McCullough presented his findings Friday at a Vancouver hearing held by the [B.C. Utilities Commission in Vancouver to review the project](#).

He concluded that BC Hydro's thinking around Site C doesn't reflect today's realities.

- [B.C. Utilities Commission needs more info from Hydro to complete Site C review](#)

"Time has moved on," he said. "These huge megadams take too long to construct. They're expensive to build, and you have to plan them a decade in advance.

"The competition is cheaper. It's a lot less risky, and you only have to order them a year or two in advance. The economics have changed."

While McCullough's figure of \$2 and \$4.4 billion comes from a scenario of pursuing only wind power, he says further savings could be achieved by adding solar and geothermal to the mix.

- [Cheaper to cancel Site C dam than delay B.C. megaproject until 2025, report says](#)

Analyst says look at Washington State

A BC Hydro spokesperson says the province needs Site C to meet an anticipated 40 percent increase in electricity demand over the next 20 years.

But McCullough says that BC Hydro has routinely overestimated energy demand, and current estimates are off by 30 percent.

"They were assuming the LNG sector was going to explode, but as we know, the LNG sector is not exploding," he said, adding that the pulp and paper sector's energy demands are also declining because of lower newsprint production.

- [United Nations panel calls for halt of B.C.'s Site C dam](#)

He says BC Hydro's case also does not reflect the decreasing price for wind and solar energy. He says over the last five years, wind production costs have gone down 60 per cent and solar even further.

"BC Hydro assumes that technology already in place and working Washington [State] wouldn't work in British Columbia.

"This is simply amusing: it's the same society, the same terrain, the same weather — usually bad."

McCullough says cheaper energy in the U.S. means BC Hydro won't have much of an export market for Site C power, either.

He is scheduled to appear before the BCUC again on Saturday.

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