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The Facts Are Piling Up Against the Site C Dam

This is our chance to finally make the right decision.

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A sweeping view of the Peace River. Photo by Darcy Sawchuk.

The facts against one of B.C.'s most controversial projects are stacking up. Way up. The Site C dam was never a good idea for British Columbia — not 60 years ago when it was first planned, and certainly not today. We need your voice to help stop it.

In its government-requested review of the Site C dam, the BC Utilities Commission is raising questions that should have been asked long ago. Expert submissions to the review have added to the mountain of compelling evidence against the project. And now, with the development finally open for true public consultation, the voice of the people is finally in play.

What we've heard so far — and who we have heard it from — is astounding. Among those giving detailed submissions against the project is Marc Eliesen, former CEO of BC Hydro, who affirmed, "There never was a business case for the startup of construction of Site C, and there is not a business case to support its continuation or postponement."

International energy expert Robert McCullough shared the same sentiment, saying, "There is no need for the project. Even if there was, we'd have cheaper alternatives that are more agile, easier to site, easier to finish, and much less expensive."

Last year, in a precursor to the NDP government's call for the full review currently underway, the University of British Columbia released a report that found the Site C dam project to be completely uneconomic, including the suggestion — also made by McCullough and others — that the hydroelectric power would be sold at a loss.

Other independent reports, including the audit by Deloitte LLP commissioned by the BCUC, underscore similar questions related to the project's feasibility and lack of benefit. That study concluded that delays to construction and risks associated with contracts will cause the price tag on the project, already at close to \$9 billion, to skyrocket.

Critiques of the Site C dam go beyond its terrible economics. Two separate United Nations groups have provided a strong international perspective on the project's social and environmental impacts. UNESCO warned that the project would threaten the environmental health of Wood Buffalo Park, Canada's largest national park. And the UN's Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination recently said that the project should be halted immediately, and urged that we should "identify alternatives to irreversible destruction of Indigenous lands."

Alex Neve, secretary general of Amnesty International Canada, reinforced this perspective, stating: "The new provincial government has committed to much needed investment in B.C.'s infrastructure and social services, while also upholding the rights of Indigenous peoples. The Site C dam simply has no place in that mix."

That's not news to Robyn Fuller, councillor for the West Moberly First Nations, which along with the Prophet River First Nation has been fighting Site C in the courts for the better part of a decade, with treaty rights implications legally unresolved to this day. She told the UN, "The Site C dam will devastate a crucial natural environment on which we depend for our culture and way of life."

With the mountain of evidence reaching new heights, the Site C dam fails at almost every metric: economic, social and environmental. Many people and organizations, including the Yellowstone to Yukon Conservation Initiative, have campaigned against it for years. But even those close to the project have been struck by the depth and breadth of evidence emerging against the dam throughout the review.

What is it that makes Site C such a problematic project from so many perspectives? It comes down to four key arguments.

- **Price** — the dam would cost taxpayers between \$9 billion and \$17 billion, for power we don't need. Seventy years from now, our grandchildren will be paying off the debt from this single misguided project.
- **Reconciliation** — the Site C dam would destroy untold numbers of First Nations' cultural sites and infringe on their right to hunt and fish in their traditional territories. We can't move forward on our commitment to reconciliation while trampling on treaty rights.
- **Irreversible Damage** — the dam would flood 83 kilometres of the Peace River Valley, wiping out 13,000 hectares of vital farmland and critical wildlife habitat. This landscape is integral to our province's ecological well-being and identity. It is our true wealth.
- **Better Alternatives** — the Site C dam is not only expensive, it's outdated. The past decade has hosted global shifts that make renewables like solar, wind and geothermal more effective and economical year-over-year. The dam serves only to chase these new ideas, new skills and new investments out of our province.

As we digest the mountain of facts and evidence against the Site C dam, we are left with only one sensible action: to bring the project to an end. We must cut our losses, halt construction, and focus our attention on the projects our province really needs. This is our best (and only) chance.

We need your voice now more than ever. If you care about your tax bill, your hydro bill, our true natural wealth, and the rights of everyone in B.C., it's time to learn more about the facts against the Site C dam, spread the word, and speak up.

BCUC is holding Community Input Sessions around the province. Sessions in Vancouver and Nelson have already seen strong turnouts. Check out the schedule and sign up to attend a session near you.

You can learn more about the problems with Site C — and how you can help — at [Just the Dam Facts \(http://justthedamfacts.ca\)](http://justthedamfacts.ca) . Share what you learn with your friends and neighbours. Write your government representatives. Make

your voice heard.

Stick with the facts. It's time to say NO to Site C dam. 🍷

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