

MLA's letter gets the facts wrong on green energy regulation

BY DAVID FIELD, THE TIMES OCTOBER 26, 2010

Editor:

Re: Site C is not the answer, Oct. 8, 2010

MLA Michael Sather's letter, in which he attacks renewable green energy projects, is a predictable mishmash of inaccuracies and misinformation.

Our group, B.C. Citizens for Green Energy, has come to expect this kind of thing from poorly informed green energy opponents, but one expects a member of the B.C. Legislature to be more knowledgeable on an important subject like this and more conversant with the facts.

For starters, Sather incorrectly claims that run-of-river projects have significant negative effects on salmon and that no planning process is in place "to determine which of these projects are advisable and which are not." Sather's claim is completely inaccurate and it verges on being irresponsible.

Contrary to what Sather claims, run-of-river projects are subject to very strict environmental scrutiny with more than 50 approvals, permits, licenses and reviews needed from 14 government regulatory bodies before they can proceed.

Run-of-river projects are also built well away from any salmon-bearing stretches of a river and are typically located above a natural barrier to salmon such as a steep waterfall or an impassable elevation change.

There is extensive planning, study and environmental review involved and the process takes many years to complete at great cost.

Sather has also misrepresented what the BC Utilities Commission (BCUC) had to say about renewable energy and the independent producers who provide the energy.

Contrary to what Sather claims, the BCUC fully endorsed the role of independent green energy producers in helping to meet B.C.'s growing electricity needs.

The BCUC did not reject green energy or the independent producers who supply it to BC Hydro.

Sather must surely be aware that - in the BCUC's decision on BC Hydro's Long-term Acquisition Plan - the BCUC explicitly stated that the 68 green energy proposals BC Hydro received from independent green energy producers under the recently concluded Clean Power Call are resources that BC Hydro "can and should manage" in order to meet the province's goals for electricity self-sufficiency in a cost-effective manner.

In fact, one of the main reasons the BCUC rejected BC Hydro's Long-term Acquisition Plan (LTAP) is the fact that BC Hydro did not convincingly demonstrate to the commission that BC Hydro's proposed conservation and demand side management measures would be more cost-effective than developing supply-side resources such as the renewable electricity that could be acquired from independent green energy producers.

Regrettably, space does not allow me to counter each and every one of MLA Sather's inaccurate and misleading claims.

However, for anyone wishing to explore the question of green energy in B.C., we have further information available on our BCCGE website (www.greenenergybc.ca).

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