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## Renewable resources the answer to energy needs

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B.C. Hydro recently updated its energy forecast for the province and the new numbers (contained in B.C. Hydro's draft integrated resource plan) show that electricity demand in this province will grow by a whopping 50 per cent over the next 20 years; from the current 56,838 gigawatt hours of electricity per year to 89,590 gigawatt hours per year by 2032.

Although some of this increased energy demand will be the simple result of population growth, the big driver of electricity demand in this province over the next 20 years is clearly going to be the development of natural resources in B.C.'s north; for example, liquefied natural gas (LNG) plants in the northwest, gas fields in the northeast, and a number of new mines.

B.C. Hydro believes it can cover nearly one-third of the expected growth in energy demand through energy conservation (9,800 gigawatt hours of energy per year).

However, that still leaves two-thirds of the forecasted increase in energy demand that will need to be met with electricity from generated sources.

Given that the proposed Site C dam is expected to cover 5,100 gigawatt hours per year of that demand, it means that B.C. Hydro is still going to need to find an additional 17,852 gigawatt hours of generated energy per year.

This is good news for B.C.'s independent green energy producers and for the development of our province's untapped natural abundance of renewable energy. Based on several widely available estimates of B.C.'s untapped renewable energy resources that our group (B.C. Citizens for Green Energy) looked at, B.C.'s untapped potential for generating renewable energy is easily two to three times B.C. Hydro's total existing hydroelectric generating capacity.

In fact, during B.C. Hydro's most recent call for clean, renewable energy in 2008, it received 68 proposals from 43 green energy producers for more than 17,000 gigawatt hours of clean, green, renewable energy per year.

B.C.'s renewable green energy producers and resources are more than up to the challenge of helping meet B.C.'s increasing need for energy over the next two decades. And very clearly, the development of B.C.'s north offers an exciting opportunity for us to develop more of B.C.'s abundant renewable energy resources while also creating jobs and economic opportunities across the province.

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