

Campbell River Mirror - Community

Toba Inlet an exemplary project

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Re: NDP hopeful still doesn't like run-of-the-river private power (Mirror: Feb. 3).

I can't help wondering whether NDP energy critic John Horgan has ever visited the Toba Inlet project he derides or whether he is simply dismissing the project, and others, sight unseen.

It would be a shame if MLA Horgan's opinion was formed without firsthand knowledge and experience.

By all accounts, the Toba Inlet project is an exemplary project and fully conforms to the high environmental standards set by the provincial and federal governments. As MLA Horgan must surely know, renewable energy projects are subject to more than 50 approvals, permits, licences and reviews from 14 government regulatory bodies before they can proceed.

I must also question MLA Horgan's assertion that B.C. does not need more electricity. Professor George Hoberg of UBC's Department of Forest Resources Management says otherwise, and it clearly shows that B.C. has become a net importer of electricity in recent years with a "declining trade balance" in electricity.

BC Hydro has become particularly reliant on electricity imports as can easily be seen in the crown corporation's annual reports. In fact, 2009 was the ninth year out of ten in which BC Hydro ended up being a net importer of electricity.

There's really no question that we need new electricity supplies here in B.C. And despite MLA Horgan's rhetoric to the contrary, B.C.'s independent green energy producers have demonstrated that they can produce a major portion of the clean energy we need and reliably supply it to the grid in an efficient and cost-effective manner. The clean energy being supplied by independent producers is therefore very much in the public interest.

David Field, B.C. Citizens for Green Energy