



Canadian Unitarians for Social Justice

President, Margaret Rao president@cusj.org

www.cusj.org

Tuesday, December 12th, 2017

To: John Horgan, Premier of BC

Michelle Mungall (BC Minister of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources)

George Heyman (BC Minister of the Environment and Climate Change Strategy)

Dear Premier Horgan,

I am writing to you on behalf of Canadian Unitarians For Social Justice, a national faith-based network that promotes ‘the inherent worth and dignity of every person’ and ‘respect for the interdependent web of life, of which we are a part.’

Your decision to proceed with the Site C dam project leaves your supporters, the West Moberly and Prophet River First Nations, the farming community of Peace River Valley, and environmentally-minded Canadians, feeling deeply betrayed. The NDP throne speech promised a climate action strategy that would create new green jobs throughout the province. You also promised to adopt the principles of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

You claimed the previous government’s decision to approve the Site C dam “wasn’t about public policy; it wasn’t about energy policy; it wasn’t about the best interests of British Columbians.” If this was true then, it’s equally true now. There are alternative energy options.

The BC Utilities Commission Report tells us:

- The project will not be built on schedule or within the proposed budget.
- Dwindling demand for energy does not justify continuing to throw good money after bad.
- There are increasingly viable alternative green renewable energy sources, and constantly improving storage methods, that are much cheaper than megaprojects.
- Constant technological innovation promises to result in reduced demand in the future.
- Innovative technologies are changing everything about the way we generate and use energy. Investing massive sums in megaprojects like Site C dam will reduce our ability to take advantage of these new methods. We have to start using our resources to build a sustainable economy for our children.

Investing in Site C constrains your ability to make these new promised investments. Marc Eliesen, former CEO of BC Hydro says, “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.”

Green Party Leader Andrew Weaver criticized the decision to continue construction. He stated, “It is fiscally reckless to continue with Site C.”

Chief Roland Willson of the West Moberly First Nations insists the costs to restore damaged areas of Peace River Valley are greatly exaggerated, stating that “The Peace Country is very resilient” and would return to its natural state largely on its own: “A little bit of recontouring, make the place safe and then just leave.”

I recommend you follow Chief Willson’s sage advice and walk away from the political boondoggle of your predecessor’s making. Leave the megaproject behind and move into the forward-looking 21st century electricity grid. More resilient, decentralized, renewable energy resources such as wind and solar, emerging bio-mass technologies, and energy conservation, are projects British Columbians can get behind, in a world challenged by climate change.

Premier Horgan, your newly formed government has a generational opportunity to advance reconciliation with Indigenous peoples through renewable energy partnerships and shared stewardship of B.C.’s precious land and waters. Your promise to deliver on a new climate plan compels you to make wise energy choices today, for an affordable and sustainable tomorrow.

Standing on the Side of Love and Justice!

Sincerely,

Margaret Rao

President, Canadian Unitarians for Social Justice

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