

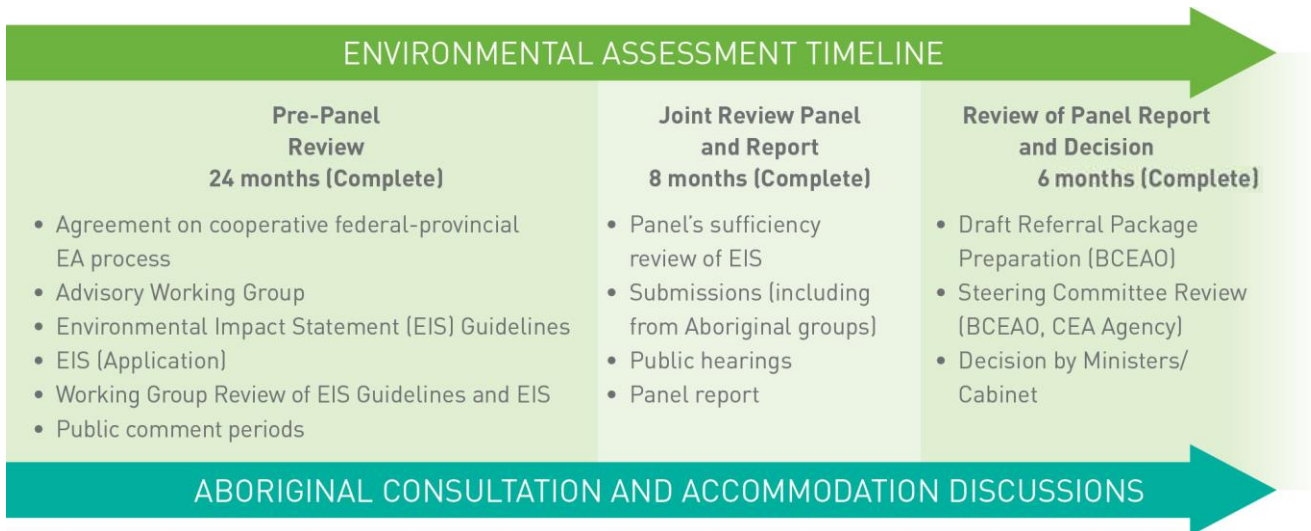
SITE C CLEAN ENERGY PROJECT

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW PROCESS

In October 2014, the federal and provincial governments announced that the Site C Clean Energy Project (Site C) received environmental approval. Environmental approval of Site C comes with numerous conditions from the federal and provincial governments that BC Hydro must meet to build and operate the facility. BC Hydro is committed to meeting these conditions.

The approval of the project follows a cooperative federal-provincial environmental assessment process by the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency (CEA Agency) and the British Columbia Environmental Assessment Office (BCEAO). The process started in August 2011 and took approximately three years to complete.

The environmental assessment process for Site C was thorough and independent and included multiple opportunities for timely and meaningful participation by the public, Indigenous groups, all levels of government, and other interested stakeholders.



As part of the environmental assessment, BC Hydro undertook multi-year studies to identify and assess potential project effects and proposed comprehensive mitigation measures. All of this information was documented in approximately 30,000 pages in the Site C Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and associated documentation.

The extensive review process included two months of public hearings in several regional and First Nations communities under an independent Joint Review Panel.

In its May 2014 report, the Joint Review Panel concluded that the benefits of the project are clear, and that *“Site C would be the least expensive of the alternatives, and its cost advantages would increase with the passing decades as inflation makes alternatives more costly.”*

The Panel also concluded that *“Site C, after an initial burst of expenditure, would lock in low rates for many decades, and would produce fewer greenhouse gas emissions per unit of energy than any source save nuclear.”*

A rigorous three-year process

- May 2011** BC Hydro submitted a Project Description Report for Site C to the CEA Agency and the BCEAO.
- August 2011** The Project Description Report was accepted by the regulators, formally commencing the environmental assessment process.
- September 2011** A draft federal-provincial agreement was released by the regulatory agencies for a cooperative environmental assessment of Site C, including a Joint Review Panel process. A 30-day public comment period on the agreement followed.
- February 2012** The federal-provincial agreement was finalized (and amended following the implementation of the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act 2012*).
- April 2012** Draft EIS Guidelines for the Site C project were issued by the agencies for a 45-day public comment period, which included open house sessions in key communities in northern B.C. and Alberta.
- September 2012** Final EIS Guidelines were provided to BC Hydro by the federal Minister of Environment and the Executive Director of the BCEAO. The EIS Guidelines set out the information that must be included in the EIS for Site C.
- January 2013** The Site C EIS was filed with the CEA Agency and the BCEAO. The EIS provides a detailed report of potential environmental, economic, social, health and heritage effects and proposes mitigation measures.
- February to April 2013** A 60-day public comment period on the EIS took place, including open house sessions in Fort St. John, Hudson's Hope, Dawson Creek, Chetwynd, Town of Peace River (Alberta), and Prince George.
- July 2013** BC Hydro submitted an amended EIS to the CEA Agency and the BCEAO.
- August 2013** CEA Agency and BCEAO advised that the EIS as amended was satisfactory and a three-member Joint Review Panel was appointed, commencing the Joint Review Panel stage of the environmental assessment process.
- November 2013** Following an Evidentiary Update to the EIS in early September and several rounds of information requests, the Joint Review Panel determined that the EIS as amended contained sufficient information to proceed to a public hearing.
- December 2013 to January 2014** The Joint Review Panel held a public hearing over five weeks in five communities in the Peace region, as well as six First Nation communities.
- February 2014** BC Hydro submitted its Final Argument to the Joint Review Panel.
- May 2014** The Report of the Joint Review Panel, including the Panel's conclusions and recommendations, was submitted to the BCEAO and the Federal Minister of Environment on May 1, 2014.
- October 2014** Federal and provincial governments announced that Site C received environmental approval.