

Regional and Local Government Liaison Committee (RLGC) Meeting Notes

Thursday, June 3, 2010, 12:30 – 2:30 pm
Crown Room, Quality Inn Northern Grand Hotel
Fort St John, BC

ATTENDEES:

Regional and Local Government Liaison Committee Members

- Mayor Karen Anderson, District of Hudson's Hope
- Chair Karen Goodings, Peace River Regional District
- Mayor Fred Jarvis, District of Taylor
- Mayor Bruce Lantz, City of Fort St John
- Mayor Evan Saugstad, District of Chetwynd
- Mayor Larry White, District of Tumbler Ridge
- Mr. Pat Crook, Councillor, District of Mackenzie
- Ms. Kim Eglinski, Regional Councillor, Northern Rockies Regional Municipality
- Mr. Arthur Hadland, Director, Peace River Regional District
- Mr. Wayne Hiebert, Director, Peace River Regional District
- Ms. Gwen Johansson, Councillor, District of Hudson's Hope
- Ms. Cheryl Shuman, Councillor, City of Dawson Creek
- Mr. Fred Banham, CAO, Peace River Regional District
- Mr. Doug Fleming, CAO, District of Chetwynd
- Ms. Dianne Hunter, CAO, City of Fort St John
- Mr. Peter Thomas, CAO, Village of Pouce Coupe

BC Hydro:

- Susan Yurkovich, BC Hydro, **Chair**
- Dave Conway, BC Hydro
- Siobhan Jackson, BC Hydro
- Dawn Teasdale, **Meeting Recorder**

ABSENT WITH REGRETS:

- Mayor Mike Bernier, City of Dawson Creek
- Mr. Tim Caton, Director, Peace River Regional District
- Mayor Lyman Clark, Village of Pouce Coupe
- Mayor Stephanie Killam, District of Mackenzie
- Mayor Bill Streeper, Northern Rockies Regional Municipality

KEY THEMES:

- Participants requested additional information about consultation opportunities in Stage 3.
 - Participants agreed to provide comments on the draft Terms of Reference.
 - Participants requested additional information and clarity about the environmental assessment process, particularly opportunities for stakeholders and the public to provide comment.
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1. Welcome and Introduction – Susan Yurkovich

Discussion:

- Susan Yurkovich, Chair, welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked them for coming.
- Regional and Local Government Liaison Committee (RLGC) meetings are intended to be an open and frank meeting forum, and BC Hydro is welcoming committee members' input on the topics brought forward.
- RLGC meetings are an early way for BC Hydro to engage with stakeholders but are not meant to replace the formal Environmental Assessment (EA) process or other specific engagement with each community.
- BC Hydro will also be undertaking Local Government Technical Engagement as a complementary engagement process with local government staff from each community.
- In addition, BC Hydro will undertake to public and stakeholder consultation, as well as consultation within the formal EA process.

Roundtable introductions were undertaken by meeting attendees.

2. Review Draft Terms of Reference – Susan Yurkovich

Discussion:

- Draft committee Terms of Reference (TOR) were distributed to committee members for feedback and discussion.
- It was suggested that BC Hydro circulate a list of all proposed engagement processes and their TORs to the committee.
 - Chair agreed to circulate a list of proposed engagement processes, but noted that BC Hydro is unable to circulate information on formal processes, like EA, because those processes are directed by the regulators.
- It was suggested that the TOR clarify the role of Chief Administration Officers on the RLGC.
- Following a discussion around the purpose of point 3.6 of the draft TOR, it was clarified that public delegations should go through city/town/regional council meetings, not RLGC meetings.
- There was a discussion regarding the purpose of RLGC meetings and a suggestion that Site C should be addressed as a standing item on Peace River Regional District (PRRD) meeting agendas, rather than a separate committee such as the RLGC. It was agreed that RLGC meetings should proceed as separate meetings from the PRRD meetings so that PRRD meeting agendas are not dominated by Site C.
- It was agreed that in early stages of the project, meetings will take place 4 times a year, taking into account the PRRD meeting schedule. BC Hydro will re-evaluate meeting frequency, with committee input, as the project moves forward.
- Discussion around lack of geotechnical studies/safeline and agriculture information in Stage 2.
 - Chair assured committee that Stage 3 will include the following key technical issues:
 - Impact lines (formerly known as safeline)
 - Seismic/Maximum Design Earthquake (MDE) and how MDE is calculated
 - Environmental standards
 - Safety standards
 - Agricultural studies

Action Items:

- **D. Teasdale:** Circulate draft Local Government Technical Engagement Terms of Reference.
- **D. Teasdale:** Circulate list of other engagement processes being contemplated by BC Hydro.
- **RLGC Committee Members:** Provide input on RLGC TOR to Susan Yurkovich via email by June 30, 2010.
- **D. Teasdale:** Circulate revised RLGC TOR, incorporating input from committee, when available.

3. BC Hydro Update: Presentation of Key Findings from Stage 2 Work/Overview of Stage 3 – Susan Yurkovich

Discussion:

- Committee members agreed that Regional Business Liaison Committee, as proposed by BC Hydro, would be appropriate and appreciated by members of the region's business community.
- Discussion around the life of the proposed Site C dam. An observation was made that some historical reports have put the life of the dam at 70 years, while more recent reports have said 100 years. Participant requested opportunity to view modelling of dam lifespan.
- Discussion around the Environmental Assessment consultation process, working groups, membership and scope of decision making.
- Participants asked for information on what the EA process will entail. As BC Hydro has not yet been informed of what the EA process will be for the proposed Site C project, the Chair provided a brief outline of what BC Hydro anticipates the process will look like, noting that the BCEAO will determine all processes:
 - Working groups are normally set up by the BC Environmental Assessment Office (BCEAO) to provide input into the EA process and study subjects, comprised of representatives from First Nations and local, provincial and federal governments
 - Working groups normally support both the BCEAO and the and the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency (CEAA)
 - If a joint panel is formed, the panel would run the EA review process, and would provide recommendations to the BC and Federal Ministers as to whether or not the project should proceed, or under what conditions
- Participants asked for a cost estimate for Stage 3. The Chair responded that the cost of Stage 3 is dependent on the process that is determined, including the number of years required to complete.
- Participants asked what opportunities would be provided for the public to provide comment, including who tracks the comments.

Action Items:

- **S. Yurkovich:** Arrange meeting between PRRD Director, Arthur Hadland and Site C Senior Engineer regarding modelling of Site C dam lifespan.
- **S. Yurkovich:** Clarify opportunities for public involvement and comment during Environmental Assessment process, including who responds to and tracks public comments and questions, and provide information to Councillor Gwen Johansson.

4. Technical Update: Local Government Technical Engagement and 2010 Field Studies – Siobhan Jackson

Discussion:

- PRRD lead discussion on BC Hydro current invasive weed program and concerns related to program.
- Clarification of RLGC terms of reference and whether the purpose of the committee was to provide information or to consult for the purpose of decision-making. The Committee Terms of Reference state that the committee is an information-sharing forum.
- Some participants expressed concerns that Stage 2 issues and input was not addressed. The RLGC Chair committed to communication of how feedback is being incorporated into Site C work plans.
- Suggestion that food security for agricultural lands be investigated and role of the Agricultural Land Reserve Commission in preserving agricultural lands in Stage 3.

- Suggestion that recreational benefits to regional communities from proposed Site C dam need to be addressed in open manner.
- Chair provided assurance to Committee that all efforts will be made to avoid impacts first. If avoidance cannot be achieved, then mitigation options will be developed..
- Comment that Peace River as a “Heritage River”, and that the area was identified for protection by the Land Resource Management Plan (LRMP) - and clarification that the LRMP framed the protected designation as, only if the proposed Site C dam does not go forward.

Action Items:

- **S. Jackson:** Follow up with Mayor Larry White regarding opportunities for Tumbler Ridge palaeontologists.
- **S. Yurkovich:** Follow up with Karen Goodings regarding PRRD request for capacity funding for costs associated with PRRD investigation and analysis of the impacts of the proposed Site C dam.
- **S. Jackson:** Provide briefing note on BC Hydro’s current invasive weed control plan to Director Tim Caton and Jill Copes at the Peace River Regional District. Note to include information on feasibility of adding steam cleaning of BC Hydro equipment to program.
- **S. Jackson:** Compile historic research summarising previous Peace River fisheries studies available to BC Hydro, as of 2008, and distribute to committee.

5. Round Table – All

- A participant suggested that the consultation discussion guides from Stage 2 consultation led to a false impression of recreational benefits from proposed project.
- A question was asked about who or what agency is looking at the cumulative impacts of proposed projects.
 - BC Hydro provided clarification that the cumulative effects of proposed project will be addressed, per the requirements of the Canadian Environmental Assessment process.
- Discussion about the effects of the proposed Site C project on regional landowners and a comment that landowners are considering working as a group or groups to discuss common concerns.
- Chair confirmed that minutes from RLGC meetings be brought back to committee for review and also be made public on BCH website and that they be submitted to the future EAO process.
- In the case of disagreement with information presented at RLGC meeting, participants asked if note of their disagreement in the meeting notes would be sufficient or whether they would need to register as an intervener in the EA process to have their position put forward.
- As part of the project scoping process, there was a request that BC Hydro assess the potential impacts and benefits of the powerhouse access bridge with and without public use.
- Further discussion on need for Peace Region to remain free of invasive weeds, including blackleg fungus and suggestion that BCH consider steam cleaning equipment brought in from Alberta, where fungus is prevalent, to avoid spread in region.
- A participant commented that BC Hydro’s commitment to communities is lost when BCH closed community offices.
- Discussion regarding recent advertisements about the Clean Energy Act that show support for building new projects are not appropriate and that future advertisements need to respect both the for and against sides of a project.
- Discussion regarding new provincial focus on B.C. becoming an exporter of electricity.
- BC Hydro clarified that power from proposed Site C project would be used to meet domestic load growth.

Action Items:

- **S. Jackson:** Meet with each local government to discuss capacity funding requirements for committee members to participate in Local Government Technical Engagement.

The meeting ended at 2:31 pm.