



FIRST NATIONS SUMMIT

NEWS RELEASE

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Approval of Site-C Dam project a major step backwards in Provincial Government relations with BC First Nations

Coast Salish Territory/Vancouver – First Nations Summit leaders are denouncing today's decision by the Government of BC to approve BC Hydro's Site-C Dam project on the Peace River, approximately seven kilometers west of Fort St. John in northeastern BC.

The proposed dam will result in the flooding and destruction of 5,550 hectares of land within the traditional territory of Treaty 8 First Nations. This construction of Site-C will undoubtedly have significant negative impacts on the ability of Treaty 8 First Nations to exercise their constitutionally-protected Treaty rights to harvest and to engage in various traditional activities on the land surrounding the reservoir.

"BC and Canada have chosen to completely ignore their constitutional duty to consult and accommodate Treaty 8 First Nations prior to making this decision. This approach is unacceptable and an affront to the cultivation of constructive government-to-government relations between the provincial government and BC First Nations", said Robert Phillips of the First Nations Summit political executive.

"As we have said time and time again, to both government and industry, the necessary consultation standard for any development project in BC, especially those with such a high potential for negative impacts, such as Site-C, must be to seek the free, prior and informed consent of each and every First Nation whose Aboriginal title and rights will be impacted", added Grand Chief Edward John, also of the FNS political executive.

First Nations Summit Chiefs in Assembly passed a unanimous resolution at the October 2014 First Nations Summit meeting in support of Treaty 8 Tribal Leadership's opposition to the Site C-Dam project. The resolution states;

- 1. That the First Nations Summit Chiefs in Assembly unequivocally support Treaty 8 tribal leadership in their position on the proposed Site C Dam project proposal and their assessment that the proposed project is a threat to their ability to exercise their constitutionally-protected Treaty rights, the survival of their culture and people.*
- 2. That the First Nations Summit Chiefs in Assembly urge the provincial and federal governments to immediately cease proceeding with the proposed Site C Dam project, notwithstanding having issued environmental approvals.*

The First Nations Summit supports the Treaty 8 Tribal Association's position that alternative clean energy options such as geothermal, wind and other small hydro-electric projects, that are more economical, create less risk and can be built in partnership with local communities, be considered instead of an antiquated approach to meeting BC's future power needs that Site-C represents.

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The First Nations Summit speaks on behalf of First Nations involved in treaty negotiations in British Columbia. The Summit is also a NGO in Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations. Further background information on the Summit may be found at www.fns.bc.ca.

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