

The dark side of Canadian hydropower exposed in U.S. International Trade Commission investigation

Posted by Joan Russow

Wednesday, 26 August 2020 13:01 - Last Updated Sunday, 13 September 2020 11:54

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[August 2020: Developing News:](#)

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[This post is a road map to a critical ongoing investigation into the greenwashing of Canadian hydroelectricity. Topics addressed are in separate tabs accessible from the home page.](#)

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[Brief and testimony from Indigenous communities and their allies are highlighted here and all materials are available directly from the ITC website by looking up Case. No. 332-574 at](#)

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[United States International Trade Commission](#)began an investigation into renewable electricity imports including Canadian hydroelectricity. The name of the investigation is “Renewable Electricity: Potential Effects of Increased Commitments in Massachusetts.” The investigation is ongoing and NAMRA and others provided key testimony in July and August 2020 about the dark side of Canadian hydroelectricity production.

four topics, including Massachusetts’ plan to use Canadian hydroelectricity to meet “ambitious goals for seeking alternative renewable means of providing energy while also reducing greenhouse gas emissions.” The U.S. House Committee on Ways and Means requested the investigation in January 2020 letter. Representatives from both sides of the border are participating.

The greenwashing of this hydroelectricity was exposed in the ITC proceedings. NAMRA has asked for an investigation of fraudulent claims by hydropower promoters about the climate and greenhouse gas benefits of this dirty energy.

Canadian Senator McCallum asked the ITC “how can we possibly call the energy produced by

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hydro megadams green, clean, or most importantly, ethical?"

This is a critical issue for the planet and front line communities!

Canada's hydropower monopolies, subsidized and backed by US and Canadian governments and politicians are aggressively marketing this hydroelectricity as clean energy, spending hundreds of millions of dollars on lobbying and marketing. Canada is building new dams – 60% more. Unscrupulous Wall Street investors are financing transmission corridors to import this electricity to the U.S.

Sierra Club and NAMRA Map of Destructive Canadian Hydro Transmission Corridors

Canadian hydropower has turned vast areas of land and water into toxic wastelands. More dams are a disaster for the planet and humanity.

The highlight of the investigation to date has been the graphic submittals from Canadian Senator Mary Jane McCallum, an Indigenous woman and her constituents from Tataskweyak Cree Nation laying bare the environmental racism of Canadian hydropower. This testimony shows how once free-flowing rivers sustained communities for millennia and are now “dangerous sources of drinking water, natural foods, and toxic pollution.” This is a result of 500 years of colonialism and racism as described in Power Failure. The Impacts of Hydropower in Manitoba and the Pulitzer Center series. Wrong Shade of Green.

From Tataskweyak Cree Nation: fish with lesions caused by toxic contaminants as a result of from Manitoba Hydro operations that disrupt river systems and degrade water quality. Indigenous communities in remote subarctic regions where Canadian hydropower facilities are located rely on wild foods for survival. Because fish and wild foods are poisoned with methylmercury from the dams and are unhealthy, there is food insecurity.

Senator McCallum describes her personal experience is “as an Indigenous woman who was raised on the land, taken from my land-based living to be sent to residential school, but who has since continued to return to my communities to understand the ongoing power imbalance and

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cycle of oppression which Hydro is implementing through their brazen interaction with the community.”

Canadian hydropower’s environmental racism occurs in “countless First Nations across Canada” according to Senator McCallum. She wrote to the ITC “to convey the past and lived experiences of the First Nations on their lands, territories, and environment and to focus on the extension of racism” carried out by the provincial and federal governments alongside the hydropower industry.

Who is promoting this dirty energy

Hydropower development is carried out by Canadian monopolies – such as Nalcor Energy and Hydro-Quebec in the eastern provinces, in central Canada by Manitoba Hydro, and B.C. Hydro in British Columbia, the most westernmost province. There are three new megadams and more planned (see part 4 below).

Key dates in the ITC investigation: July 15 and 27. Pre-hearing briefs July 29 – Hearing held before the ITC Commissioners Kearns (Chairman), Stayin, Johanson, Schmidlein, and Karpel and staff. The transcript of the hearing is August 7. Post-hearing briefs. Sierra Club briefs are here. August 14. Final submissions: Briefs and testimony of Canadian Senator Mary Jane McCallum Tataskewak Cree Nation