

Horgan to Hydro: Don't Sign New Site C Contracts or Evict Residents

Written by Joan Russow

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By Emma Gilchrist • Thursday, June 1, 2017 -

B.C. Leader John Horgan has written to B.C. HYDRO CEO Jessica McDonald to urge the crown corporation not to finalize any contracts or evict any residents to make way for the Site C dam until a new government is in place.

"I note that the majority of British Columbians who voted in this election voted for parties that want to see the Site C project reviewed or stopped," Horgan wrote to McDonald.

A co-operation agreement between the B.C. NDP and Green Party released this week indicated that if the NDP forms government, Site C will immediately be sent for an expedited review by the B.C. Utilities Commission .

However, construction will not be paused during the review, which has led to concerns that irreversible harm could be done to the Peace Valley in the coming months. Enter today's letter to McDonald.

"I write to you today to express my concern regarding impacts on the community of Bear Flat, the West Moberly First Nation, the Prophet River First Nation, and other families and communities impacted by the government's decision to expropriate lands for the advancement of Site C," Horgan wrote.

B.C. Hydro recently extended the leases for some families in the Peace Valley by one month beyond the original May 31 eviction date.

"While this is a welcome respite, I believe there is no demonstrated short term need to force these families from their homes, and because the status of the next governments of British Columbia are uncertain, the threat of imminent removal of residents from their expropriated homes and property is unreasonable," Horgan wrote.

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“Given what the Premier has characterized as a probable change in government over the coming weeks, we urge BC Hydro to suspend the evictions from these lands and grant a further extension on the timeline so that impacted families can stay in their homes until the future of Site C is firmly determined.”

With a price tag of \$9 billion, the Site C dam is the most expensive public infrastructure project in B.C.'s history. The reservoir created by the dam will flood 107 kilometres of the Peace River. Experts have raised questions about the cost of the project and need for the power.