

Minister Responds on Terasen

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By Richard Neufeld

Re: Michael Smyth's column on the sale of Terasen. Terasen Inc. has gas, pipeline and water utility-company subsidiaries, including Terasen Gas (formerly called B.C. Gas), which has always been a private company. It acquired B.C. Hydro's gas division in 1988, expanded in Alberta, and renamed the gas division Terasen Gas. Kinder Morgan, a U.S. firm, has made an offer to purchase Terasen Inc. In B.C., no person or firm can own more than 20 per cent of any regulated utility without approval of the B.C. Utilities Commission an independent agency created to ensure ratepayers' interests are protected. Investment Canada also reviews these acquisitions. Michael Smyth refers to Bill 85, a bill passed based on the BCUC's recommendation following a public inquiry. A key benefit of the bill was to put Terasen Inc. on equal footing with other regulated utilities. The result was also a reduction in unnecessary regulatory requirements and revitalization of B.C.'s economy by encouraging job creation.

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