
OPINION-EDITORIAL

CASCADE POWER PROJECT PROVIDES RELIABLE ELECTRICITY FOR B.C.

By Richard Neufeld

Minister of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources

September 27, 2006

This past summer, the Cascade heritage power project received a provincial environmental assessment certificate for a proposed 25-megawatt run of river hydroelectric project on the Kettle River near Christina Lake. We need run-of-river hydro projects to help us meet the increasing demand for electricity in our growing province. We also remain committed to our goal of responsible and environmentally sustainable development of our renewable resources.

The environmental assessment certification requires the proponent to meet a long list of commitments. These include measures to protect fish and wildlife water quality, and places of special significance to First Nations. These measures will also help protect the natural beauty of the Cascade Canyon Falls area and related local tourism.

Our province has enjoyed the advantage of clean and low-cost reliable hydroelectricity for many years. But our need is growing. The fact is we have become a net importer of electricity and the gap between electricity supply and demand will only increase.

So where will this power come from? We are in the enviable position of having an abundance of resources including hydro, wind, solar, tidal, biomass, geothermal, and fuel cell technologies.

We need them all. One of the sources of power generation is through independent power production like this small-scale hydro project. Projects like this one will help us diversify our energy supplies and achieve sustainable, environmental objectives.

While we consider the options and the trade-offs available to meet B.C.'s increasing electricity demand, we can all begin to help offset that demand through increased conservation. Whether it's turning off a light or installing more energy efficient appliances, every decision we make to conserve electricity is money in our pocket, and it will help reduce overall demand.

Our Province is committed to being a world leader in the sustainable development of energy, building on our historic leadership in clean energy production, particularly hydro. It takes all of us - private citizens, industry and all levels of government - to create the solutions to our present and future energy needs. We need to work together to leave our children a secure legacy in the future. And that work needs to begin now.