

A Health Approach to Environmental Impact Statements

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northern health
the northern way of caring

Overview

- Working example of an EHOs involvement in Environmental Impact Statement review/comments
 - Project description
 - EIS Specifics
 - HA involvement
 - Activities
 - Challenges
 - Lessons Learned

Project Description

BC Hydro - Proposed Site C Dam and Generating Station

- Third dam on Peace River
- 1,100 megawatts of capacity
- 5,100 gigawatt hours of energy



Project Description continued

- Close proximity to City of Fort St John
- Increase in income and jobs regionally and provincially
- Flooding of river valley near Hudson Hope
 - Prime farm land
- Influx of workers to the region
- Need for industrial camp to house workers

Proposed BC Hydro Site C Project



Project EIS

- 15,000+ pages
- Focus on valued components
 - Issues identified,
 - Potential effects outlined,
 - Mitigation measures proposed



Health Authority Involvement

- Considered an interested party
- EHO as contact for information and updates
- Attend working groups
- Comment on EIS
- Comment on response to first round of comments

Review and Comment on the Environmental Impact Statement

Review timeline - 60 days (Feb-April 4, 2013)

- Determination of relevant sections
 - Human Health
 - Drinking and Recreational Water Quality
 - Air Quality
 - Noise and Vibration
 - Electric and Magnetic Fields
 - *Methylmercury in Fish* (Country Foods)

Health Canada has a guidance document for reviewing these sections.

Review and Comment on the Environmental Impact Statement

- Relevant sections continued
 - Community Infrastructure and Services
 - Health Services
 - Municipal (Community) Services
 - Onsite Camp Sewer and Potable Water Infrastructure
 - Health in other sections
 - Housing
 - Transportation
 - Overall and general Health comments

Review and Comment on the Environmental Impact Statement

- Review of sections and supporting studies
 - Traditional EHO areas of expertise
 - Reviewing as representative of Health Authority, not just an EHO
- Consultation
- Compiling comments and drafting response
- Circulating response for approval
- Submitting response

Challenges

- Timeline
- Limit to EHOs knowledge
- Collaboration
- Technical reports
- Lack of attention to Social Determinants of Health



Overcoming Challenges

- Collaboration
- Clear requests to the right people
- Listening to the people
- Efficient work
- Adding in what was missing



Submission

- 6 page letter with comments on EIS - could have been much longer
- Reviewed and approved by all levels of NH
- Public record, now available on the EAO website
- Proponent required to respond to submission

Not quite done

- BC Hydro responded to our comments - if we did not comment on this response it is considered that they have adequately addressed all our comments.
- Further comments to their response submitted.

Lessons Learned

- Start early and plan for delay
- It will take a long time!
- Have go to contacts ready
 - (specialists, regional experts, etc.)
- You are required to comment on their response if it doesn't completely satisfy your initial comments

Conclusion

It's a long process with a heavy workload but if done systematically and with collaboration a good product can be produced.

