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Suzuki
Foundation

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Federation of
B.C. Naturalists

8 September 2006

Premier Gordon Campbell
Legislative Buildings
Victoria, BC

**Princeton Wood Residue and Coal Power Generation Project
(Compliance Energy Corporation),
and Wapiti Power Development Project (AESWapiti Energy Corporation)**

Dear Premier Campbell,

We, the undersigned, as representatives of the organizations named, are writing to request:

1. That the responsible ministers exercise their powers under the *Environmental Assessment Act* to require full public hearings for the environmental assessments (“EAs”) of the Princeton Wood Residue and Coal Power Generation Project and the Wapiti Power Development Project, with province-wide advertising and notification of the EA proceedings.
2. That the responsible ministers exercise their powers under the *EA Act* to require terms of reference for the EAs that will thoroughly address the greenhouse gas (“GHG”) emissions and climate change implications of the projects.
3. That, in addition to the existing policy directive disallowing nuclear power, the Government of BC issue an immediate policy directive requiring that all new electricity generation projects in BC should employ only low-impact renewable technologies.

We represent a growing constituency of British Columbians who are deeply concerned about air quality in their communities and about global climate change, which is driven by human-caused greenhouse gas (“GHG”) emissions.

At the same time, our members and supporters are excited by the potential of sustainable alternatives – demand-side management, wind, solar, tidal, small hydro and other renewable energies – to meet our electricity needs, support a vibrant economy in BC and help the BC government meet its goal of having the best environmental management in the world.

We support a sustainable energy industry because, compared to conventional approaches such as coal and gas-fired power, it can:

- Create more jobs per unit of power and drive more economic growth;
- Reduce air pollutants and improve people's health;
- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions; and
- Present a positive vision of our energy future that can attract more public support.

We are very concerned by your government's recent decision to award contracts to two coal-fired power projects, the Wapiti and Princeton projects. They represent the first major coal-fired generation facilities integrated into the BC grid, effectively committing BC to a coal-fired electricity strategy without any public discussion or consultation.

They represent a 30-40 year commitment to unnecessarily elevated provincial GHG emissions and dangerous pollutants at a time when progressive jurisdictions the world over are moving in the opposite direction and closing coal-fired power plants.

They represent century-old technology coming on-line in the Olympic year, while BC is attempting to present itself to the world as a forward-looking, environmentally responsible region.

And they represent an enormous opportunity lost for your government to live up to its commitment to have the best environmental management in the world, "bar none".

There is no basis for describing these proposed plants as 'clean coal,' as the Minister of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources has done. As proposed, these plants would emit large amounts of air pollutants and vent hundreds of thousands of tonnes of greenhouse gases each year. In fact, the government seems willing to accept emission rates that are no better than BC's current guidelines. In comparison with the Sumas II gas-fired power plant, which your government rightly opposed for reasons of air quality, the current BC guideline for pollution from coal-fired boilers would, according to our preliminary estimates, allow the plants to emit:

- 70 times more NO_x,
- 260 times more SO_x,
- 7 times more particulate matter, and
- toxic mercury emissions.

These air pollution issues are of particular concern for the people of the Similkameen Valley, where the proposed Princeton plant would discharge, because of the relatively enclosed airshed, and for the people of Dawson Creek, Tumbler Ridge Kelly Lake and other communities in the Peace region who live within the immediate airshed of the proposed Wapiti plant. None of these communities, nor others who may face similar proposals in the future, would likely be receptive to arguments as to why they are deserving of lesser air quality standards than residents downwind of Sumas II.

Greenhouse gas emissions are also a huge concern. Your government has adopted GHG reduction goals of improving our performance with regard to per capita emissions both within Canada, and in comparison to Washington and Oregon State. Yet these two plants together could (depending of the fuel mix used) emit up to 1.8 megatonnes per year of CO₂ equivalent, a 2.7% increase in the entire province's GHG emissions. In a province already dealing with the impacts of climate change, and struggling to achieve its emission reduction goals, the decision to approve coal-fired power plants without even considering their GHG emissions seems irresponsible.

We believe that, with its abundant low-impact renewable energy resources, BC does not need and should not have coal-fired generation. British Columbians do not support coal-fired generation, as evinced by recent polling by BC Hydro and others. We trust your government would not want to commit British Columbia to coal-fired generation without first consulting

fully with British Columbians to inform them on the consequences and alternatives, and to obtain their views. We look forward to hearing your thoughts on this matter.

Yours sincerely,

Guy Dauncey, BC Sustainable Energy Association
Lisa Matthaus, Sierra Club of Canada, BC Chapter
Will Horter, Dogwood Initiative
Casey Brennan, Wildsight
Nikki Skuce, One Sky
Nicholas Heap, David Suzuki Foundation
Oonagh O'Connor, Living Oceans Society
Jeremy McCall, Federation of B.C. Naturalists
Arthur Caldicott, GSX Concerned Citizens Coalition

cc:

Honourable Barry Penner, Minister of Environment
Honourable Richard Neufeld, Minister of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources
Chris Trumpy, Deputy Minister, Environment
Greg Reimer, Deputy Minister, MEMPR
Peter Ostergaard, Assistant Deputy Minister, Electricity and Alternative Energy, MEMPR
Lee Thiessen, Manager, Climate Change, Ministry of Environment
Dan Green, Director, Climate Change, Electricity and Alternative Energy, MEMPR
Brian Murphy, Project Assessment Director, Princeton Power Project, BC EAO
Gary Alexander, Project Assessment Director, Wapiti Power Development Project, BC EAO
John Tapics, Compliance Power Corporation
Ed Beswick, Hillsborough Resources Limited
Tom Kunde, AES Corporation
Bob Elton, President and CEO, BC Hydro and Power Authority
Mayor and Council, City of Dawson Creek
Mayor and Council, District of Tumbler Ridge
Mayor and Council, District of Chetwynd
Mayor and Council, Town of Princeton
Chairperson and Directors, Peace River Regional District
Chair and Directors, Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen
all BC MLAs