



March 12, 2019

Letter to Editor, News North

Re: NWT MLAs' Comments on the Site C dam

In recent statements in the NWT Legislative Assembly, MLAs raising the issue of the Site C dam on the Peace River have pointed to the authority of trans-boundary water agreements and the protections they provide against the negative impacts of the dam. These statements are as false as the ability of these agreements to protect our waters.

The NWT Chapter of the Council of Canadians continues to work with the Slave River Coalition and folks throughout Treaty 8 Territory including in the Peace River Valley to try to stop the proposed Site C dam on the British Columbia side of the Peace River. We oppose this unnecessary, destructive, and costly dam for its negative downstream impacts, its trampling of Indigenous rights and title, and threats to food sources and water.

While about 25% of the Site C dam budget has been spent, no actual work on the dam has started. **Site C can be stopped. It should be stopped for impacts it will have.** Already, two-thirds of the drying of the Peace Athabasca Delta which supports Wood Buffalo National Park, a UNESCO world heritage site, is the direct result of the existing dams on the Peace River. Site C will make things much worse. It will make things much worse for people in Fort Good Hope, Fort McPherson, and every other community along the Mackenzie that relies on boats and barges. It will severely impact the ecosystem of the whole Mackenzie River Basin.

Yet with these impacts facing us, we listened to MLAs in the NWT Legislative Assembly last week wipe away concerns about Site C by holding up trans-boundary water agreements as magic deals to protect us from upstream developments. My goodness, what a deception!

It is good that trans-boundary water agreements exist as they are a springboard for water monitoring BUT they are not rooted in legislation and cannot compel action. And they may be totally useless. In fact, the NWT-BC Trans-boundary Water Agreement has no relevance to our concerns about the Site C dam because it only applies to rivers that flow directly from BC to the NWT.

It is so disappointing to have MLAs waste our time and resources spinning deception in the NWT Legislative Assembly when our water is at risk.

Lois Little,
NWT Chapter, Council of Canadians