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*“Working to protect the
natural environment of
the Tongass, and Sitka’s
quality of life – Since
1967”*

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Takatz Lake Scoping Comments
P-13234

To Whom It May Concern:

On behalf of the Sitka Conservation Society and its over 800 members in Sitka, Alaska, we would like to take this opportunity to give input during the Scoping process for the Takatz Lake Hydro-Electric Project. There are a number of issues that we would like to recognize where we would request further evaluation.

To begin, after polling our membership, we found that there seems to be a good deal of support for this project. The consistent issue that was flagged by respondents was the transmission corridor across the island and the impacts of the work in Baranof Warm Springs. We found that even amongst individuals for whom the project has always raised red flags, there was a general feeling that in order to meet our community renewable energy goals, this project was necessary. However, those same respondents cited certain aspects of the project that they would vigorously oppose.

The following are some of the general reasons why the Sitka Conservation Society is supportive of the Takatz Lake Project:

- The project will provide the community with renewable electric energy from a community owned generation source
- The project will help the community to significantly reduce consumption of petroleum products
- The reduction of use of petroleum products will help to reduce the community’s overall carbon emissions
- In the face of increasing scarcity of oil and/or rising prices of oil, this project will aid in overall community energy economics
- Initially, the project seems to be focusing on a system where there will be minimal disturbance to salmon as opposed to other hydro-electric projects that have had significant salmon impacts elsewhere

In order to prove or bolster our support of this project, we request that the following analysis be conducted in the course of licensing studies so that a full evaluation can be conducted:

1. Analysis of total energy generation from this project, and all other Sitka hydro-projects, as it relates to total community energy consumption in order to answer the following questions:
 - a. What percentage of total (residential and commercial electric consumption, transportation needs and electric vehicles, home and commercial facility heating, etc) community energy demand can be satisfied by energy derived by hydro-electric facilities (with and without Takatz Project)
 - b. The total reduction in carbon emissions resulting from construction of Takatz Lake Hydro facility and subsequent conversion to electric energy use
 - c. Continued and updated analysis of projected energy demand in Sitka
 - d. Reasonable evaluation of alternative options to Takatz Lake

Concerns:

Although the Sitka Conservation Society is in general agreement with the need for the Takatz Lake Project, there are a number of issues that do raise concerns. In regards to these issues, we will request further studies and analysis. Some of the concerns we have include:

- The impact of the transmission corridor
- The likelihood that the transmission corridor will become a transportation corridor and subsequent impacts of a transportation corridor
- The impact of the project on Baranof Warm Springs
- Overhead transmission lines vs. underground transmission lines
- The route chosen for the transmission lines/utility corridor
- The impacts of the transmission corridor on Medvijie Lake

To address the above concerns, we would request the following studies and analysis:

1. Analysis of transmission corridor impacts
 - a. Ecological
 - b. Social
 - i. Baranof Warm Springs
 - ii. Impacts on the Remote Recreation LUD that the transmission corridor crosses
2. If a transportation corridor is part of the project, a full analysis of the impacts of the transportation corridor on the lands accessible, the community of Baranof Warm Springs, and the ecological, scenic, and recreational resources along the corridor
 - a. In the areas accessible, especially Medvijie Lake, the impact of a transportation corridor and road
3. An analysis of the projects impacts on Baranof Warm Springs

4. An analysis of overhead vs. underground transmission lines including the costs over project's total life cycle, the potential of avalanches on overhead lines, viewshed impacts, etc.
5. An analysis of the viability of the chosen route and a complete analysis of alternative routes
 - a. Alternative routes should include a transmission corridor directly from Takatz Watershed to the Blue Lake Watershed to reduce total project footprint and to connect with existing powerline infrastructure starting at the Blue Lake Campground.
 - b. An analysis of all potential routes for the transmission corridor is indicated in the current Tongass Land Management Plan for areas in a Remote Recreation LUD: *This LUD represents a Transportation and Utility System (TUS) "Avoidance Area." Transportation and utility sites and corridors may be located within this LUD only after an analysis of potential TUS corridors has been completed and no feasible alternatives exist outside this LUD. Refer to the Transportation and Utility section for direction. (TLMP 2008 pg. 3-48)*
6. An analysis of the impacts of road construction/utility corridor work on the water quality, scenic value, and recreation value of Medvije Lake

We would also like to note that we would like auxiliary efforts to meet Sitka energy demand to continue on par with the development of the Takatz Lake Project including energy conservation efforts, generational and transmission efficiency improvements, alternative generational analysis, zoning and building code modifications to reduce energy demand, etc.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.



Andrew Thoms
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Sitka Conservation Society