

OUR LAND IS OUR FUTURE

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UNION OF B.C. INDIAN CHIEFS
CHIEFS COUNCIL

FEBRUARY 26TH-27TH, 2020

MUSQUEAM COMMUNITY CENTRE, X^WMƏƏK^WƏY^ƏM (MUSQUEAM TERRITORY)

Resolution no. 2020-14

RE: Call for Moratorium on Fracking Near Peace River Dams

WHEREAS the Peace River valley is and has always been more than a place to the Dunne-za (Beaver people). It is a vital part of their cultural identity, the main artery of their territory, connecting them to their ancestors, kin, and the spirit world. Since time immemorial it has been where they fish, trap, gather, camp, and teach children the Dunne-za way of life;

WHEREAS this way of life is protected by Treaty 8 and is unextractable from the Peace River region;

WHEREAS the Site C Dam will permanently destroy the last remaining portion of the Peace River region capable of sustaining the Dunne-za way of life. It will flood 83 kilometers of river valley, increase health risks from methylmercury contamination, extirpate multiple species of preferred fish, destroy rare plants, medicines, and sensitive ungulate habitat, and destroy sacred sites community gathering places;

WHEREAS the new report “Peace River Frack-Up” by Ben Parfitt draws on internal correspondence and documents from BC Hydro and exposes the potential impacts caused by fracking and disposal sites on the Peace River Dams, finding that BC Hydro has known since the 1970’s that its Peace Canyon Dam is built on weak, unstable rock and that an earthquake triggered by a nearby natural gas industry fracking or disposal well operation could cause the dam to fail due to the foundational problems;

WHEREAS both the frequency and the intensity of earthquakes have increased in the Peace River region in tandem with increased fracking operations;

WHEREAS an independent panel of three scientists reported to the British Columbia government in 2019 that there is no scientific means of calculating how powerful an earthquake could be that is induced by fracking and disposal well operations;

WHEREAS the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, which the government of Canada has adopted without qualification, and has, alongside the government of BC committed to implement, affirms:

Article 37(1): Indigenous peoples have the right to the recognition, observance and enforcement of treaties, agreements and other constructive arrangements concluded with States or their successors and to have States honour and respect such treaties, agreements and other constructive arrangements;

WHEREAS Parfitt's report finds that the disposal sites and fracking sites will continue to trigger shifts in the existing fractures and faults which riddle the Peace River. There continues to be many risks as construction at Site C continues, while upstream the Peace Canyon Dam and W.A.C Bennett Dam could fail and cause disastrous effects downstream;

WHEREAS the most effective way to limit the risk of dam failure and the devastating potential consequences for workers and residents downstream is by banning disposal sites and fracking anywhere near BC Hydro's Peace River Dams – this includes the massive WAC Bennett Dam, the Peace Canyon Dam and Site C; and

WHEREAS the UBCIC Chiefs Council has consistently opposed Site C and has supported the Treaty 8 First Nations in their opposition, as ratified in Resolutions 2011-25, 2015-14 and 2018-05.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED the UBCIC Chiefs Council joins the call for an immediate ban on fracking activity close to BC Hydro's two existing Peace River Dams as well as Site C; and

THEREFORE BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED the UBCIC Chiefs Council directs the UBCIC Executive to work with West Moberly First Nation and like-minded organizations to demand that the Province implement this ban immediately and ensure that the appropriate precautions and preventative measures with respect to fracking are taken in the future, with any risks found to be immediately and transparently disclosed to the public.

Moved: Chief Chad Eneas, Penticton Indian Band
Seconded: Chief Keith Crow, Lower Similkameen Indian Band
Disposition: Carried
Date: February 27, 2020