

LOWER CHURCHILL HYDROELECTRIC GENERATION PROJECT
JOINT REVIEW PANEL

PROJET DE CENTRALE DE PRODUCTION D'ÉNERGIE HYDROÉLECTRIQUE DANS
LA PARTIE INFÉRIEURE DU FLEUVE CHURCHILL
COMMISSION D'EXAMEN CONJOINT

CANADIAN ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT REGISTRY 07-05-26178
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Volume 8

JOINT REVIEW PANEL

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1 That essentially concludes the
2 comments that we had. We didn't comment on
3 decommissioning because there's no decommissioning
4 plan per se to comment on. I would just add before
5 I conclude that there's a number of topics
6 addressed here that overlap with issues in the
7 aquatic environment, most notably mercury, some of
8 the fish habitat compensation things as discussed
9 this morning at various points.

10 The Proponent is proposing some
11 activity -- to take some steps during reservoir
12 preparation to prepare the reservoirs to become
13 more productive fish habitat, but we're preferring
14 to speak to those, if possible, during the aquatic
15 environment session.

16 So we'll defer some of that today
17 unless -- we can talk to it today, but we'll have a
18 presentation that will detail more of those things
19 next week.

20 So I'll leave it there. And if
21 you have any questions ---

22 CHAIRPERSON GRIFFITHS: I think we
23 might have some. Thank you very much, Mr. Bieger,
24 for your presentation.

25 --- QUESTIONS BY THE PANEL:

1 CHAIRPERSON GRIFFITHS: I think
2 I'd like to begin and I think I'll begin on de-
3 watering. I don't think you were present this
4 morning or were you for the -- you were present?

5 MR. BIEGER: Yes, I was.

6 CHAIRPERSON GRIFFITHS: So you
7 heard the discussion that we had with the Proponent
8 with respect to the likelihood that in fact, with
9 their plans, that things would go sufficiently
10 smoothly, that in fact they would hit the target
11 time. They have identified a target time for
12 impoundment and it's consistent with what you're
13 suggesting.

14 But I think there is reason to
15 believe there is -- there's some considerable
16 uncertainty that it would necessarily -- they're
17 going to try, but they're not going to absolutely
18 commit is the answer so far. I mean, that's where
19 we are.

20 I wonder if you could comment on
21 that in terms of the likelihood of -- no, let me
22 start by -- sorry, I've got to preface that by
23 saying it would appear to us when we've been
24 reviewing everything with respect to fish and fish
25 habitat, that should the project go ahead, the fish

1 in all their stages currently in the Churchill
2 River are kind of in for a rude shock because they
3 are going to be hit by not one sort of adverse
4 effect but by a whole series of them that will have
5 greater or lesser impact.

6 So, ultimately, we have to be
7 concerned about the combined effect of all these
8 things that will be happening to fish in the
9 system. I mean, including what happens the moment
10 you impound and the dewatering and those effects
11 and the habitat changes and so on right through to
12 the 20 years of high levels of mercury in the fish
13 and so on.

14 So we're very well aware of that.
15 So a corollary it would seem is that you have to be
16 very concerned, perhaps more concerned, about any
17 individual effect that might happen because
18 ultimately the fish are dealing with a combined
19 effect.

20 So that's my preamble about this.

21 Can you please reflect a bit on
22 what you see as being the risks of going ahead with
23 impoundment at less than the optimum time?

24 I mean, there are adverse effects
25 on fish even if they do impound at the best time.

1 Can you talk a little bit about
2 that, and how crucial do you think it is that
3 something be that the Proponent adhere to the
4 proposed preferred time for impoundment?

5 MR. BIEGER: I'll give a brief I
6 guess statement or a brief attempt at that and then
7 I'll let Keith Clarke speak to that as well.

8 We've assessed the impact in this
9 presentation and I guess we've spoken to the impact
10 as -- of an impoundment as planned by the
11 Proponent, and they're indicating impoundment
12 between August and October, which allows for
13 impoundment at a time that is reasonably benign or
14 less benign than other options for fish -- sorry --
15 more benign -- at a time where it's less disruptive
16 to fish in August and September.

17 And that's -- the comments -- you
18 know, obviously we would prefer to see that. I
19 think that's one of the prime considerations that
20 has led to that time being identified is that it's
21 a time that's relatively better for fish.

22 The Proponent I understand has
23 described the impacts during various other times of
24 the year as well should impoundment take place at
25 other times of the year, and there are other