1 INTRODUCTION

British Columbia Hydro and Power Authority (BC Hydro) proposes to construct and operate the Site C Clean Energy Project (the Project). As further described below, an environmental assessment of the Project is being conducted pursuant to the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, 2012*, S.C., 2012, c. 19 (CEAA 2012) and the B.C. *Environmental Assessment Act*, S.B.C., 2002, c. 43 (BCEAA).

On September ~~5~~7, 2012, in accordance with CEAA 2012, BCEAA and the "Agreement to Conduct a Cooperative Environmental Assessment, Including the Establishment of a Joint Review Panel, of the Site C Clean Energy Project" dated February 8, 2012, as amended in August 2012 (the BC/Canada Agreement), the "Site C Clean Energy Project Environmental Impact Statement Guidelines" (the EIS Guidelines) were issued by the Minister of Environment of Canada and the Executive Director of the Environmental Assessment Office of British Columbia (The Minister of Environment of Canada and the Executive Director of the BCEAO, 2012).

1.1 Guiding Principles

The following principles are set out on page 1 of the EIS Guidelines:

> "**Environmental Assessment**
>
> Environmental Assessment (EA) is a comprehensive process to identify and evaluate the potential effects of a proposed major project and ways to avoid or mitigate adverse effects.
>
> **Public Participation**
>
> The overall objective of public participation is best achieved when all parties have a clear understanding of the proposed project as early as possible in the review process. The public will be provided with opportunities to participate in the environmental assessment process.
>
> **Aboriginal Consultation**
>
> BCEAO and Canada are committed to working constructively with Aboriginal groups to ensure that the Crown fulfills its duties of consultation and accommodation. The proponent must ensure that it engages with Aboriginal groups that may be affected by the project, or that have asserted or established Aboriginal rights or treaty rights in the project area, as early as possible in the project planning process."

The EIS Guidelines go on to state:

> "An environmental assessment conducted in accordance with the agreement between the Ministers of Environment of BC and Canada with respect to the environmental assessment of the Project and with these EIS Guidelines, which have been developed under that Agreement, will meet the objectives of these principles."

1.1.1 Comprehensive Environmental Assessment

This Environmental Impact Statement contains a record of a comprehensive environmental assessment of the Project that:

- Meets the requirements of the EIS Guidelines
- Is sufficient for the purpose of public hearings to be conducted by a Joint Review Panel
- Provides the basis upon which the Minister of Environment of Canada can make a decision under Section 52 of CEAA 2012
- Provides the basis upon which the Ministers of Environment and of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations of British Columbia can make a decision under Section 17(3) of BCEAA
- Demonstrates that if the Project will result in significant adverse effects, it can be justified by the benefits of the Project and the need for the Project

1.1.2 Public Participation

This EIS demonstrates that the public has been provided with information about the Project and afforded an opportunity to provide input since 2007, four years prior to the commencement of the environmental assessment. This EIS also demonstrates that, to date, the public has been afforded the opportunity to participate in the assessment in accordance with BC/Canada Agreement and the EIS Guidelines.

1.1.3 Aboriginal Consultation

This EIS demonstrates that BC Hydro has engaged with Aboriginal groups that may be affected by the Project, or that have asserted or established Aboriginal rights or treaty rights in the project area, as early as possible in the project planning process. In particular, BC Hydro commenced engagement with those Aboriginal groups in 2007, four years prior to the commencement of the environmental assessment.

1.1.4 Sustainability

This EIS demonstrates that globally recognized principles and practices for corporate social responsibility and sustainability have been incorporated into the planning of the Project: modifying designs to minimize footprint and avoid effects where possible; developing mitigation measures and compensation plans, often in consultation with the public and stakeholders to reduce effects; working with Aboriginal groups and local communities to reach benefit sharing agreements and partnerships that would foster economic development.

1.2 Purpose of this Environmental Impact Statement

In May 2011, BC Hydro submitted the “Project Description Report – Site C Clean Energy Project” (BC Hydro 2011) (the Project Description Report) to the Executive Director (the Executive Director) of the British Columbia Environmental Assessment Office (the BCEAO) and to the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency (the CEA Agency).

The Project will:

- Have an installed energy generating capacity of up to 1,100 MW
- Require two new 500 kV transmission lines adjacent to two existing 138 kV transmission lines along approximately 77 km of existing and widened right-of-way
- Require a realignment of portions of Highway 29
- Require the creation of new quarries and the expansion of existing sand, gravel and stone quarries

Each of these are or may be reviewable under the *Environmental Assessment Act*, S.B.C., 2002, c. 43 (BCEAA) and the *Reviewable Projects Regulation*.

Prior to the enactment of CEAA 2012, federal agencies concluded that the Project will require:

- Approval under the *Navigable Waters Protection Act*, R.S.C., 1985, c. N-22
- Authorization under the *Fisheries Act,* R.S.C., 1985, c. F-14

Each of these requirements in turn engaged a requirement for an environmental assessment under the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act*, S.C., 1992, c. 37 (CEAA) and the *Law List Regulations*, SOR/94-636.

The Minister of Environment of Canada and the Minister of Environment of British Columbia agreed to a cooperative environmental assessment of the Project and entered into the BC/Canada Agreement. The purpose of that agreement is set out in its preamble:

> "**WHEREAS** the federal Minister of Environment and the provincial Minister of Environment has determined that a cooperative environmental assessment including a joint review panel for the Site C Clean Energy Project will avoid unnecessary duplication and delays that could arise from individual reviews by each government; and agree to establish a joint review panel for the Site C Clean Energy Project; …"

Under CEAA 2012 (and formerly under CEAA), the Minister of Environment of Canada or the federal responsible authority, as the case may be, and under BCEAA, the Minister of Environment of British Columbia or the Executive Director, as the case may be, each has the duty to i) ensure that, where the environmental assessment of a project is required, an assessment is conducted, and ii) determine the scope of the assessment required to meet the statutory requirements and purposes of CEAA 2012 and of BCEAA, respectively. In order to ensure that they would meet their respective statutory obligations and that an environmental assessment of the Project would be conducted in a manner that would meet the statutory requirements and purposes, the BC/Canada Agreement provides for a process for the development of draft EIS Guidelines, requires the Executive Director and the Minister of Environment of Canada to determine whether the EIS Guidelines are adequate and, when they have made that determination, to finalize and issue the EIS Guidelines.

On September ~~5~~7, 2012, upon completion of the process for development, review, and finalization of the EIS Guidelines prescribed in the BC/Canada Agreement, the Executive Director and the Minister of Environment for Canada issued the EIS Guidelines to

BC Hydro. On page xi of the EIS Guidelines, the Minister of Environment of Canada and the Executive Director state the following:

> "For the purposes of the environmental assessment under CEAA and to serve as the Environmental Assessment Certificate (EAC) Application for the Project, the Proponent must provide an EIS. In this document, the information which must be included in the EIS is identified."

The purpose of this EIS is to provide the information that the Minister of Environment of Canada and the Executive Director have identified in the EIS Guidelines as required.

1.3 Presentation and Organization of the Environmental Impact Statement

The information required by the EIS Guidelines is set out in this EIS in five volumes and their appendices.

To the extent possible, the EIS is organized in a manner that parallels the organization of the EIS Guidelines. While there is some variation, the concordance between the contents of this EIS and the EIS Guidelines is demonstrated in detail in the Table of Concordance and is summarized below.

Note that Section 27 of the EIS Guidelines contains a series of references for the Guidelines themselves. Those references are not reproduced in the EIS.

Also note that Section 28 of the EIS Guidelines contains a requirement to include a series of technical data reports and other documentation used to support the content of the EIS. Technical data reports and other documentation are appended to each of the volumes described below.

1.3.1 Volume 1: Introduction, Project Planning, and Description

In Volume 1 of the EIS, the information required by the following sections of the EIS Guidelines is set out:

- Section 1 of the EIS Guidelines: Guiding Principles, Purpose of the Environmental Impact Statement, Presentation, and Organization of this EIS
- Section 2 of the EIS Guidelines: Proponent Description
- Section 3 of the EIS Guidelines: Project Overview
- Section 4 of the EIS Guidelines: Need for, Purpose of, Alternatives to, and Alternative Means of Carrying out the Project
- Section 5 of the EIS Guidelines: Project Benefits
- Section 6 of the EIS Guidelines: Assessment Process
- Section 7 of the EIS Guidelines: Information Distribution and Consultation

1.3.2 Volume 2: Assessment Methodology and Environmental Effects Assessment

In Volume 2 of the EIS, the information required by the following sections of the EIS Guidelines is set out:

- Section 8 of the EIS Guidelines: Effects Assessment Methodology
  - In Volume 2 of this EIS, the methods used in compliance with the requirements set out in Section 8 of the EIS Guidelines are described
  - In addition, the specific methods used to conduct technical studies and to assess the potential effects of the Project on the valued components (VCs) are further detailed in the corresponding technical data reports appended to this EIS and in the discussion of the potential effects of the Project on each of the VCs
- Section 9 of the EIS Guidelines: Environmental Background
- Section 10 of the EIS Guidelines: Fish and Fish Habitat Effects Assessment
- Section 11 of the EIS Guidelines: Vegetation and Ecological Communities Effects Assessment
- Section 12 of the EIS Guidelines: Wildlife Resources Effects Assessment
- Section 13 of the EIS Guidelines: Greenhouse Gases Effects Assessment

1.3.3 Volume 3: Economic Effects Assessment

In Volume 3 of the EIS, the information required by the following sections of the EIS Guidelines is set out:

- Section 14 of the EIS Guidelines: Economics Effects Assessment
- Section 15 of the EIS Guidelines: Traditional Lands and Resource Use Effects Assessment
- Section 16 of the EIS Guidelines: Land and Resource Use Effects Assessment

1.3.4 Volume 4: Social, Heritage Resources, and Health Effects Assessments

In Volume 4 of the EIS, the information required by the following sections of the EIS Guidelines is set out:

- Section 17 of the EIS Guidelines: Social Effects Assessment
- Section 18 of the EIS Guidelines: Heritage Resources Effects Assessment
- Section 19 of the EIS Guidelines: Health Effects Assessment

1.3.5 Volume 5: Aboriginal Interests and Information, Federal Information, and Environmental Management Plans

In Volume 5 of the EIS, the information required by the following sections of the EIS Guidelines is set out:

- Section 20 of the EIS Guidelines: Asserted or Established Aboriginal Rights and Treaty Rights, Aboriginal Interests, and Information Requirements

- Section 21 of the EIS Guidelines: Summary of Proposed Environmental Management Plans
- Section 22 of the EIS Guidelines: Compliance Reporting
- Section 23 of the EIS Guidelines: Requirements for the Federal Environmental Assessment:
    - In Volume 5 of this EIS, compliance with particular requirements imposed by, or typically found in environmental assessments conducted under, CEAA is demonstrated. This is achieved in Volume 5 by:
        - Discussion of specific assessments conducted in compliance with particular requirements
        - Reference to other parts of this EIS where particular federal requirements are met
- Section 24 of the EIS Guidelines: Summary of Potential Residual Effects of the Project
- Section 25 of the EIS Guidelines: Complete Lists of Mitigation and Follow-up Measures
- Section 26 of the EIS Guidelines: Conclusion

References

Literature Cited

Agreement to Conduct a Cooperative Environmental Assessment, Including the Establishment of a Joint Review Panel, of the Site C Clean Energy Project dated February 8, 2012, as amended in August 2012.

The Minister of Environment of Canada and the Executive Director of the BCEAO. 2012. Site C Clean Energy Project Environmental Impact Statement Guidelines. September 5, 2012. Pursuant to the British Columbia *Environmental Assessment Act* and the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act.*

BC Hydro. 2011. Project Description: Site C Clean Energy Project. May 2011. Submitted to the BC Environmental Assessment Office and the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency. BC Hydro, Vancouver, B.C.