

18 February 2010

MacKenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board
200 Scotia Centre
Box 938, 5102-50th Avenue
Yellowknife, NT X1A 2N7

Attn: Mr. Martin Haefele

RE: Taltson Hydroelectric Expansion Project
The Reliance Route Adjustment

Dear Sir:

First and foremost, I must point out that my family has a long term and strong vested interest in the northern economy, with a focus on the benefits of mineral and resource development; and I support it. We are cognisant of the needs of our people to fulfill their economic aspirations through meaningful participation in responsible resource development. However, it is with regret, yet clear resolve, that I respectfully communicate to your board my opposition to the Reliance Route Adjustment. Considering the degradation of the wilderness value of this unique area, this is simply not an alternative that is in the overall best interest of Canadians.

I have been a resident of the Northwest Territories for 41 years and along with my family have travelled extensively to the Artillery Lake/Reliance area for 35 years without interruption. I own, have occupied and maintain a small cabin beside the fuel cache overlooking Trophy Lodge across from Police Bay, since the early 1970's.

Reliance is the "Doorway to the Barrens" and has been a strategic and logistical centre for the region for centuries. This is also evident by the substantive archaeological remains that are prolific from Reliance to Artillery Lake and beyond; this component should have been considered in this process. A rich history of journals and books have been written in the last two centuries outlining its significance as a staging ground for arctic forays. A clear thread in these journals is that everyone was touched by the unique qualities of this area.

From an aviation perspective, "Reliance" is a licensed aerodrome (CJN8). Was Transport Canada notified in writing by the proponent? The name "Fairchild Point" speaks for itself and its aviation history. This important and strategic location has been used extensively by the aviation community since the beginning of float and ski equipped aircraft in the north. To illustrate this history, riveted drums from the 1920's can still be found in the area.

Reliance, namely Police Bay, was chosen for good reason and is a very busy place throughout the spring, summer and fall, both with fixed wing and helicopter traffic.

The fuel cache, which is easily supplied by barge, even supports a well provisioned outhouse. It continues to offer a vital fuel link for aircraft returning from the Baker Lake area in strong prevailing westerly upper winds. As a refuge from the large waves entering the bay in a west wind, the curl at the back of Police Bay provides absolute shelter in any weather component.

From a technical perspective, Fairchild Point is not without its own existing aviation encumbrances. Considering its exposure to the west and hills to the east and south of Police Bay, in any easterly wind component the only departure is into Police Bay with an immediate left bank to the north, in order to avoid hills directly ahead or to the south. This exit strategy would most certainly be eliminated with a power line running up the north shore of Fairchild Point. In a north-northwest wind component, a departure must be executed to the west from the depths of Police Bay with a bank into wind. A power line between the points would also compromise a safe departure in this scenario.

As Reliance will most likely become the centre of activity for a future park and continue to support future resource developments to the east, I believe the water aerodrome in Reliance is CRITICAL to the area. Any compromise to its capacity as such will also be a hazard to safe logistical operations in the region. The need for ongoing safety and consideration for possible medical evacuations cannot be ignored.

As an enormous watershed and transition from forest to Barren lands, the Reliance/Artillery area also contains a rich and active component of flora and fauna. This is also well documented by those who work in these fields, and the people who currently live in the region. The traditional knowledge of those whose ancestors have been there for centuries, has not been fully taken into account in this process. They will also verify the unique and spiritual qualities of this area. Artillery Lake and Lockhart River are virtually unspoiled, and offer their own special wonders.

Caribou cross by the thousands at times where Artillery dumps into the Lockhart. In leaving Artillery Lake, the super cooled aqua blue water plunges through a background of pink granite on its way to the bowl at the end of Charlton Bay. The water is so chilled in the 700 ft drop that it forms an iceberg in this bowl that is a unique spectacle in and of itself. The plumes of mist from Perry Falls, on some days, can be seen some 40 nautical miles away. This stretch of river rivals the Hanbury and Wilberforce Falls on the Hood River.

For me, evaluation of this area would not be complete without mention of Maufelly Point; my own most sacred place in the region. Aside from almost meeting my maker here on one occasion, the celebration of life it offers on a glass calm summers evening is unparalleled. The panoramic view, and in particular that of Sentinal Point 30 miles away, should never be spoiled by any structures beyond those in a picnic ground. Even small children can catch Grayling or Trout from shore in its ever moving outflow from the Lockhart.

I have recently spoken with The Right Honourable John Turner, former Prime Minister of Canada, and with Bob Engle, former owner of NWT Air. They outlined how they have both, together, extensively canoed, hiked, and boated the area over a period of many years in the past. They both offered quotations they said could be included in this submission.

Mr. Turner said, "I'm dead set against any power line in this area."

Mr. Engle described the region as, "...a great watershed of historic heritage" and "I share his sentiments" with respect to Mr. Turner's statement.

In summation and firstly, all third party interests must be accommodated in perpetuity. I generally concur with the concerns and position of the people of Lutsel'ke in this matter. This process has simply not been thorough or fair.

Mr Grabke, manager of Deze Energy Corporation, has stated: "Millions of dollars have been spent on the project...". Because Deze Energy receives public funds through the parent company of one of its partners (NTPC) it has a clear obligation to the citizens of the NWT. It must genuinely and fully explore other alternatives that may benefit a broader sector of our population for many decades. It is clearly an important public decision that will impact our future.

The potential risks and overall impact of further development of this venture, with *public funds*, must also at some point be evaluated and further scrutinized by the public at large and in particular, the Public Utilities Board.

This process has been far too quiet. To be clear, this is an inappropriate commercial development through the heart of one of Canada's rare treasures.

Yours sincerely,

Raymond Decorby

cc: The Rt. Hon. John Turner
Bob Engle

Encl.









