



Environment
Canada

Environnement
Canada

Environmental Protection Operations
Prairie and Northern Region
5019 52nd Street, 4th Floor
P.O. Box 2310
Yellowknife, NT X1A 2P7

Your file / Votre référence
EA0708-007
Our file / Notre référence
4339 001 017

April 9, 2010

VIA EMAIL

Alan Ehrlich
Senior Environmental Assessment Officer
Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board
5102 50th Avenue, Box 938
Yellowknife, NT X1A 2N7

Re: Environment Canada's Information Requests to Dezé Energy Corporation Ltd. for the Additional Assessment of Kache/ Ft. Reliance Route Alternative (EC_01 to EC_02)

Dear Mr. Ehrlich:

Environment Canada (EC) is pleased to submit the following information requests (IRs) to the Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board (the Board) as part of the additional environmental assessment review process being conducted for Dezé Energy Corporation's Taltson Hydroelectric Expansion Project (EA0708-007). The answers to these questions will assist our Department in completing its final written submission for May 10, 2010, and will help the Department provide advice to the Board on the potential for adverse environmental impacts.

Should you have any questions or wish to discuss these IRs further please do not hesitate to contact me at (867) 669-4707 or Lisa.Perry@ec.gc.ca.

Sincerely,

Lisa Perry
Sr Environmental Assessment Coordinator

cc: Anne Wilson, A/Head EA North
Myra Robertson – EA Coordinator, CWS

Information Request (IR) – Migratory Birds

IR Number: EC_01

Source: Environment Canada (EC)

To: Dezé Energy Corporation Ltd. (the “Proponent”)

Reference:

- EC’s submission entitled *Dezé Energy’s Supplemental Submission for Taltson Hydroelectric Expansion Program – Adjustments to Transmission Line Route* dated February 18, 2010
- Proponent submission entitled *Closing Remarks of Dézé Energy Corporation* dated February 22, 2010
- Proponent submission entitled *Final Position on Crossing the Lockhart River* dated March 26, 2010

Terms of Reference Section:

- TOR Section 3.1.6.4 and 5.2.3, pp. 12, 26-27

“a) Key species present, and for each describe:

- I. Abundance, distribution, seasonal movements, and habitat requirements;
- II. Areas of specific use at various life stages (e.g. breeding grounds, molting periods);
- III. Any sensitive time periods or habitat;

[...]; and

c) Any known issues currently affecting birds and bird habitat in the development area.”

“For key bird species, the DAR must provide:

- a. All potential disturbances during nesting, rearing, molting, staging, and migration, (e.g. from construction activities, air traffic, [...]);
- b. Characterization of the potential for bird mortality due to collision with transmission lines and development of potential mitigation measures related to this potential impact;
- c. [...];
- d. Identification of all potential alterations to bird habitat, including loss of habitat within the Expansion Project footprint, the creation of new habitat, and [...] and
- e. Identification of mitigation measures to avoid [or] reduce impacts to birds, including precautions to be taken based on the seasonal life cycle of birds.”

Preamble:

In its submission *Final Position on Crossing the Lockhart River*, the Proponent stated that “the Reliance adjustment is neither the preferred nor proposed alignment...as such, Dézé has returned to [its] original proposal,” the inland crossing of the Lockhart River between Artillery Lake and Great Slave Lake. However, the Reliance Adjustment is offered to the Board as a potential mitigation measure to prevent significant adverse impacts.

As EC has stated previously, large concentrations of migrating geese occur each spring in the small area of open water off Maufelly Point. This is one of the few areas of open water available for the geese to stop and rest as they travel to their nesting areas further north. Concentrations of geese have also been observed in spring in the small areas of open water at the Belle Isle narrows and the mouth of the Lockhart River. Other parts of the lake and surrounding water bodies are still typically frozen in this region in spring, so these small areas of open water are critical stop-over locations for the geese. The open water off Maufelly Point is likely the most important of these areas, and is consistently used by geese each spring.

In the proposed Reliance adjustment, the transmission line crosses the small area of open water off Maufelly Point where large concentrations of geese gather each spring. EC is concerned that a transmission line within the area of this important spring stop-over location has the potential for significant adverse impacts to goose populations. There is potential for bird mortalities due to collisions with the transmission line, especially during windy weather or times with poor visibility. It is unknown whether the presence of the transmission line near the open water area may deter geese from using this area as a stop-over location.

The Proponent has not assessed the impact of the adjustments of the transmission line route on waterfowl and other birds (with the exception of briefly mentioning surveys and mitigation for raptors).

Request:

1. For the Proponent to assess the potential impacts that the alternate Reliance adjustment may have on migratory birds (including waterfowl) and/or their habitat, suggest mitigation measures to avoid or lessen impacts, and describe any monitoring that may be required to determine the effectiveness of mitigation and/or identify where further mitigation is required.

Information Request (IR) – Species at Risk

IR Number: EC_02

Source: Environment Canada (EC)

To: Dezé Energy Corporation Ltd. (the “Proponent”)

Reference:

- EC’s submission entitled *Dezé Energy’s Supplemental Submission for Taltson Hydroelectric Expansion Program – Adjustments to Transmission Line Route* dated February 18, 2010
- Proponent submission entitled *Closing Remarks of Dezé Energy Corporation* dated February 22, 2010
- Proponent submission entitled *Final Position on Crossing the Lockhart River* dated March 26, 2010

Terms of Reference Section:

- TOR Section 5.2.3, p. 26

“For Species at Risk, the analysis provided in the DAR must be of sufficient detail to allow the Review Board, as well as relevant other parties, to discharge its responsibilities under the *Species at Risk Act*, which includes:

- a) Determining whether the proposed development is likely to affect a listed species or its critical habitat;
- b) Identifying the adverse effects on the species and its critical habitat;
- c) Ensuring that measures are taken to avoid or lessen those effects, consistent with any applicable recovery strategy and action plan; and
- d) Monitoring the effects.”

Preamble:

Section 79(2) of the *Species at Risk Act* states that during an assessment of effects of a project, the adverse effects of the project on listed wildlife species must be identified, that measures are taken to avoid or lessen those effects, and that the effects need to be monitored. This requirement is also reflected in the Terms of Reference for the project.

The proponent did not assess the impact of this potential route change on Species at Risk.

Request:

1. For the Proponent to do an assessment of the Reliance Adjustment on Species at Risk and describe any applicable mitigation and monitoring measures, as outlined in the Terms of Reference.