

January 12, 2010

Submission to the Deze Energy Taltson Hydro Development Technical Hearing January 14th & 15th, 2010

Since time immemorial, the Chipewyan Metis of Fort Resolution (Deninu K'ue) have always used and occupied the lands and waters both north and south of the Great Slave Lake, within what is now referred to as Akaitcho territory, where all the mineral exploration activities are currently occurring. We have always considered it within our lands of jurisdiction, duty, and interest. We have never ceded, surrendered, or sold our authorities and rights to this area. We are a Nation, whose rights and privileges are protected under Section 35 of the Canadian Constitution.

Furthermore, we have been recognized as Metis with traditional land interest and jurisdiction in all parts of their traditional land use area. Fort Resolution (Deninu K'ue) is an old Chipewyan Dene and Metis community, where the Dene and Metis still continue to pursue their traditional activities (hunt, trap, fish, and gather) and lifestyles while moving forward in a modern world. Recently it has become more and more necessary for the Dene and Metis of Fort Resolution to address impacts, adaptation of all the resource development in the north and the world in general.

The Metis of Fort Resolution have witnessed and experienced an increase in resource exploration and development within its traditional territory, with very little or no recognition, consent, or benefits. These issues and concerns continue to remain outstanding for the Metis of Fort Resolution. We have now put a high priority on working towards resolving these matters while still working with the realities of a changing world, where the need for a strong economy with an increase world awareness of social conscience, northern claims settlement, cumulative effects, contamination, and climate change/global warming impacts. Presently, we are finding ourselves dealing with an increase in renewed interest in all types of mineral potential we have in our home territory.

Taltson Project:

In 1966, a hydroelectric generating facility was built on the Taltson River to provide power for the Pine Point Mine. The mine was closed in 1987. Since then, the hydro generation facility has been operating below its capacity, although it supplies power to Hay River, Fort Smith, Fort Resolution and Fort Fitzgerald.

The proposed Taltson Hydroelectric Expansion Project would take advantage of the excess generating capacity and untapped hydroelectric potential of the Taltson area and send power to the mines in the barren-lands. The potential now exists to provide power to mines operating north of Great Slave Lake. The Ekati, Diavik, Snap Lake and the proposed Gahcho Kue' diamond mines all require large amounts of electric energy to sustain the mines. The aim is to increase capacity at Taltson facilities without flooding or cause further damage to the environment.

The proposed Taltson Hydroelectric Expansion Project would add a new power plant to the existing 18 MW Taltson Twin Gorge plant. The new plant is to produce up to 56 MW. This renewable hydro energy,

in the range of 400 GWh per year, would displace 100 million litres of diesel fuel per year used by the mines for power generation. There will be substantial environmental benefits, less greenhouse gas emissions, and significantly less transportation of diesel across the NWT roads, less impacts to fish and wildlife habitat along the transportation route to the mines, and an overall reduction in total annual NWT greenhouse gas emissions.

The proposed hydro-line from the Taltson Facilities to the diamond mines will be constructed along a corridor of some of the most pristine environment in the NWT. The proposed route has some of the cleanest lake that serves as habitat for fish, migratory birds and wildlife. Impacts to the caribou from the 690 kilometers of hydro-line is not known. The James Bay Hydro development in the early eighties has had irreversible impacts to the riparian environment along with its resident and migrant wildlife and waterfowl. "The James Bay Phase 1 has had a catastrophic impact on the caribou herd, during the dams first year of operation, more than 10,000 caribou were drowned on their annual migration routes as a result of severe fluctuation in the river flows" The caribou herds are decreased in numbers and a hydro line even with good intent, must be explored, and investigated if necessary to minimize impacts to herds.

The spiritual significant of our people must be respected and not disturbed. The areas that the proposed hydro line route is to follow is an "undisturbed" area, our fore fathers utilized that area subsistently without causing undue impacts to the environment or its habitants. This practice must continue throughout the developmental phases, should the project get approval.

Alternate routes should be explored and presented to the public for review. A marine route was presented to the Deze Energy, this route was to run the hydro lines through the Simpson Islands on to the mainland on the north shores of Great Slave Lake, however, I don't believe it got attention it deserved. The other route brought to the Deze Energy attention was the highway route, the power corp. has existing power-lines to Enterprise, a power line could be constructed to Yellowknife along the existing highway corridor with minimum impacts to the environment and aquatic life.

The Deze energy is not mandated to what one could consider a "no action" alternative that is, the alternative of building nothing in the proposed route and relying instead on other options, such as the marine route.

However, it is more likely that the disruptions to the ecosystem by the totality of the proposed hydroelectric developments would be damaging to local habitats. Although no one can totally predict the impact of hydroelectric projects, they could be large scale.

The Fort Resolution Metis Council remains supportive of the Taltson River Hydroelectric Project providing that all anticipated environmental impacts be explored and addressed, maximized economic opportunities for affected residence, assess anticipated social impacts prior to commencement of the project. An alternate - route, be explored with a cost analysis for comparative purposes.

