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PUBLIC OPINION POLL FINDS SUPPORT FOR BUILDING SITE C

79 per cent express support for Site C, while awareness increases to 62 per cent

VANCOUVER – A new Abacus Data poll shows strong levels of support for BC Hydro's Site C Clean Energy Project (Site C), a proposed hydroelectric dam and generating station on the Peace River in northeast B.C. The province-wide poll found that 79 per cent of those polled either support building Site C (49 per cent), or can support it under certain circumstances (30 per cent), while 18 per cent are opposed.

The poll also found that province-wide awareness of Site C has increased significantly. The 2014 poll found that almost two-thirds (62 per cent) of British Columbians surveyed are aware of Site C, compared to 41 per cent in 2013.

"Rising awareness of a major infrastructure project often comes with rising levels of opposition. In the case of Site C, we are seeing a different pattern," said Abacus Data Chairman Bruce Anderson. "While there has been some increase in concern about the project, particularly in the northeast, the overall picture of opinion in the province remains supportive."

The poll on Site C also found that most people in the province are prepared to support the project provided it meets a few key conditions:

- 73 per cent of those surveyed said they would be comfortable with Site C provided there is an extensive, independent environmental review resulting in approval.
- 76 per cent of respondents said they would be comfortable with Site C if affected communities are consulted and their views taken into account as much as possible.
- 77 per cent of those surveyed said they would be comfortable with Site C as long as plenty of effort was going into conservation and other forms of clean energy.

"Site C has gone through a period of heightened attention this year, with a public hearing process and the release of a Joint Review Panel report," said Dave Conway, BC Hydro's Community Relations Manager for Site C. "The polling results suggest that as people learn more about Site C, they continue to support the project."

Other findings:

- A total of 87 per cent of respondents agree that the demand for electricity in B.C. will continue to grow in the years ahead, while 11 per cent disagree.
- When asked about support for various resource options to meet future electricity needs, the survey found:
 - 71 per cent support adding a new hydroelectric dam and generating station, while 24 per cent are opposed.
 - 65 per cent support buying more power from independent power producers (e.g., wind, run-of-river hydro), while 29 per cent are opposed.
 - 57 per cent support building more natural gas power plants, while 35 per cent are opposed.
 - 33 per cent support using higher rates to encourage conservation, while 65 per cent are opposed.
 - 21 per cent support importing more electricity from outside B.C., while 74 per cent are opposed.

The overall level of support for Site C in 2014 is similar to 2013. Last year, the poll found that 84 per cent of those polled either supported building Site C (42 per cent), or could support it under certain circumstances (42 per cent), while 13 per cent were opposed.

The province-wide telephone poll of 1,053 people took place June 16-20, 2014. The sample included an oversample of 319 people in the north/northeast region of the province. The margin of error for the study in the province-wide sample is 3.1 per cent, 19 times out of 20. The margin of error for the northern sample is 5.6 per cent, 19 times out of 20.

The Abacus Data poll is available online at: www.sitecproject.com.

About Site C

The Site C Clean Energy Project is a proposed third dam and hydroelectric generating station on the Peace River in northeast B.C. Site C would provide 1,100 megawatts (MW) of capacity, and produce about 5,100 gigawatt hours (GWh) of electricity each year — enough energy to power the equivalent of about 450,000 homes per year in B.C.

The proposed Site C project is currently undergoing a cooperative federal-provincial environmental assessment process. The process is expected to be completed in fall 2014. Site C requires environmental certification, regulatory permits and authorizations, and other approvals before it can proceed to construction.

About BC Hydro

BC Hydro has been providing clean, reliable power to British Columbians for more than 50 years while maintaining among the lowest rates in North America. BC Hydro is a provincial Crown corporation that serves 1.9 million customers and invests in the electrical system and in energy conservation to deliver a safe and reliable supply of electricity for today's customers and for generations to come.

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