

AGRICULTURE

VOLUME 3, SECTION 20

The Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) details the environmental assessment undertaken for the Site C Clean Energy project. The EIS includes the project rationale, identifies potential effects and proposes measures to avoid or mitigate these effects. The EIS also describes the benefits Site C would provide for customers, Aboriginal groups, northern communities and the province as a whole.

ABOUT THE ASSESSMENT

The agriculture assessment examined potential changes to land, individual farm operations, agricultural economy and regional food production and consumption (key aspects).

ASSESSMENT AREA

The local assessment area used for reporting changes to the agricultural land base and changes to individual farm operations includes the project activity zone and any farm operations overlapping the project zone. The local assessment area for changes to agricultural economic activity and changes to food production and consumption includes the Peace River Agricultural Region, which includes the Peace River Regional District and the Northern Rockies Regional Municipality. The regional assessment area includes the entire Peace Agricultural Region.

SUMMARY OF POTENTIAL EFFECTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

POTENTIAL EFFECTS	KEY MITIGATION MEASURES
<p>During construction and operations, there is expected to be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Temporary and permanent loss of agricultural land • Effects on individual farm operations • Change to agricultural economic activity • Change to regional food production and consumption 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement environmental management plans relevant to agricultural land and operations • Agricultural Compensation Fund to support projects such as irrigation and drainage improvements • Relocation of suitable quality soil in selected locations • Inclusion of land in the Agricultural Land Reserve based on conversations with the ALC, Crown and private landowners • Acquire land required for the project and reimburse associated financial losses • Undertake farm-specific mitigation to support continued farm operations • Evaluate effects at a farm level and enter into agreements with affected landowners to mitigate impacts in the event of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Crop and stored feed damage due to changes in wildlife habitat use ○ Crop drying due to changes in climatic factors ○ Crop production due to changes in groundwater elevation

KEY FINDINGS

- The creation of the reservoir and other project components would result in the permanent loss of approximately 3,816 hectares of land rated as capable for agricultural crop production, comprised of 3,433 hectares of Class 1 through 3, and 383 hectares of Class 4 through 5.
- Of these, approximately 1,666 hectares of land is rated as high to moderate agricultural utility for cultivated agriculture, reflecting the likelihood of future agricultural use.
- Approximately 540 hectares of land within the project activity zone are currently cultivated and used for canola, grain, forage, and improved pasture.
- There are approximately 13,200 hectares land rated as agricultural capability class 1 through 3 within the B.C. Peace River valley, and approximately 485,000 hectares of remaining class 1 through 3 land in the Peace agricultural region, that would be unaffected by the project.
- While there would be a loss of land with agricultural capability, the implementation of the proposed agricultural compensation fund would result in improvements to agriculture production on remaining lands and would mitigate the loss of current and potential agricultural production from permanently lost land.
- For farms impacted by the project, most are affected in part and therefore appropriate compensation and farm mitigation plans will support their continued operation in the valley.
- No residual effects are predicted to the ability of the region to be food self-reliant in commodities that can be produced in the region.
- Considering all aspects of the agricultural effects, the agricultural compensation fund would mitigate the project effects on agricultural production and agricultural economies. Therefore a determination of significance has not been made for Agriculture.



ABOUT THE SITE C CLEAN ENERGY PROJECT

Site C 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.

Site C is undergoing a cooperative environmental assessment by the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency (CEA Agency) and the British Columbia Environmental Assessment Office (EA0). The environmental assessment process commenced in August 2011 and is anticipated to take approximately three years to complete.

FOR MORE INFORMATION visit bchydro.com/sitec

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