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New Poll Finds Growing Support for Site C

81 per cent support or can accept Site C, while awareness increases to 75 per cent

VANCOUVER – A new Abacus Data poll shows strong levels of support for BC Hydro's Site C Clean Energy Project, a hydroelectric dam and generating station on the Peace River in northeast B.C. The province-wide poll found that 81 per cent of those polled either support building Site C (59 per cent) or can support it under certain circumstances (22 per cent), while 17 per cent are opposed.

The poll also found that province-wide awareness of Site C has increased significantly: 75 per cent of British Columbians surveyed are aware of Site C, compared to 41 per cent in 2013.

With rising awareness of Site C, overall support for the project improved by 17 per cent (from 42 per cent in 2013 to 59 per cent in 2015), while opposition increased by four per cent (from 13 per cent in 2013 to 17 per cent in 2015).

Regional Breakdown

Public support for Site C is also strong in the north/northeast region of the province, where 73 per cent of those surveyed either support building Site C (51 per cent) or can accept it under certain circumstances (22 per cent), while 26 per cent are opposed.

Regional awareness of Site C has remained very high. The poll found that 90 per cent of those polled in the north/northeast are aware of Site C, up from 78 per cent in 2013.

The province-wide telephone poll of 1,038 people took place from June 10 to 19. The margin of error for the study in the province-wide sample is 3.1 per cent, 19 times out of 20. A regional sample of 303 people from the north/northeast was included in the survey.

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

Quotes:

Diane McSherry, Vice-President and Project Director, Site C:

"We are building Site C to ensure our customers will benefit from clean, reliable and affordable electricity well into the future. While we are pleased with the overall level of support for Site C, we continue to work very hard to address issues and concerns of Aboriginal groups and communities in the Peace region. We are committed to ensuring that northern and Aboriginal communities benefit from the Site C project."

Bruce Anderson, Chairman, Abacus Data:

"For a project of this size, with the array of economic and environmental questions that will naturally come to the fore, it's quite noteworthy that support for this project continues to strengthen. Clearly, the majority of residents of the province have developed a belief that a new source of generation is needed, that hydro power is a good and affordable way to meet the province's needs, and that sincere efforts are being made to understand and mitigate the impacts of the project."

Other Key Findings:

The survey also asked respondents their views on how to best meet future electricity needs:

- A total of 92 per cent of respondents agree that the demand for electricity in B.C. will continue to grow in the years ahead, while eight per cent disagree.
- When asked about support for various resource options to meet future electricity needs, the survey found:
 - 75 per cent support adding a new hydroelectric dam and generating station, while 21 per cent are opposed.
 - 75 per cent support buying more power from independent power producers (e.g., wind, run-of-river hydro), while 21 per cent are opposed.
 - 64 per cent support building more natural gas power plants, while 32 per cent are opposed.
 - 39 per cent support using higher rates to encourage conservation, while 59 per cent are opposed.
 - 21 per cent support importing more electricity from outside B.C., while 77 per cent are opposed.

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