

SITE C CLEAN ENERGY PROJECT

AGRICULTURE

BC Hydro recognizes the important role agriculture plays in the Peace River region, and studied the potential effects of the Site C Clean Energy Project (Site C) as part of an agricultural assessment.

Site C will affect agricultural land and production, primarily through the creation of a reservoir, highway realignment and dam construction. The agricultural assessment evaluated four potential effects to agriculture: loss of agricultural land, effects on individual farm operations, changes to agricultural economies, and changes to local food production and consumption.

Key findings

More than 99 per cent of Class 1 to 5 agricultural lands (i.e., land capable of crop production) in the Peace Agricultural Region will not be affected by Site C.

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While there will be a permanent loss of approximately 3,800 hectares of Class 1 to 5 lands, approximately 2.7 million hectares of Class 1 to 5 lands will remain available for agricultural production in the region. In the Peace River valley, more than 16,000 hectares (or more than 80 per cent) of Class 1 to 5 lands will remain available.

No changes are anticipated to the ability of the region to produce food to satisfy regional consumption.

Overall agricultural production in the region is expected to benefit from proposed mitigation measures, including a **\$20 million agricultural compensation fund**.

Other proposed mitigation measures include the implementation of individual farm mitigation plans to support the continued farm operations for farms directly affected by the project.

In addition, the Province has announced a new dedicated B.C. Food Security Fund. Still under development, the fund will be based on Site C revenues and will support farming and enhancement of agricultural innovation and productivity across B.C.

Report of the Joint Review Panel

On May 1, 2014, the Joint Review Panel submitted its report on Site C to the federal and provincial governments, as part of the independent environmental assessment process.

On the effects of Site C on agriculture, the Panel wrote (page 150): *“The Panel concludes that the permanent loss of the agricultural production of the Peace River valley bottomlands included in the local assessment area of the Project is not, by itself and in the context of B.C. or western Canadian agricultural production, significant.”*

On BC Hydro’s proposed agricultural compensation fund, the Panel wrote (page 149): *“The current value of annual crops from the portion of the valley that would be inundated is but \$220,000...The proposed \$20 million agricultural investment fund, to be spent on improvements outside the inundation zone, is generous by comparison.”*