

Site C Public Opinion Findings

Province-wide Telephone Survey

To: BC Hydro
From: Bruce Anderson
Re: 2014 Tracking Study

On behalf of BC Hydro, Abacus Data completed a study of British Columbian public opinion surrounding the proposal to construct a new hydroelectric dam on the Peace River, a project known as Site C.

Survey Methodology

Field work for this study was conducted by live interviews over the telephone, with a randomly selected sample of 1,053 residents of the province, during the period June 16-20, 2014. The sample included an oversample of residents in the North Eastern part of the province, to a total of 319 cases.

The margin of error for the study the province-wide sample is 3.1%, 19 times out of 20. The margin of error for the North Eastern sample of 319 cases is 5.6%, 19 times out of 20.

The data was statistically weighted to match British Columbia's population by region, age, gender, and educational attainment.

Findings

Options to Meet Rising Electricity Demands

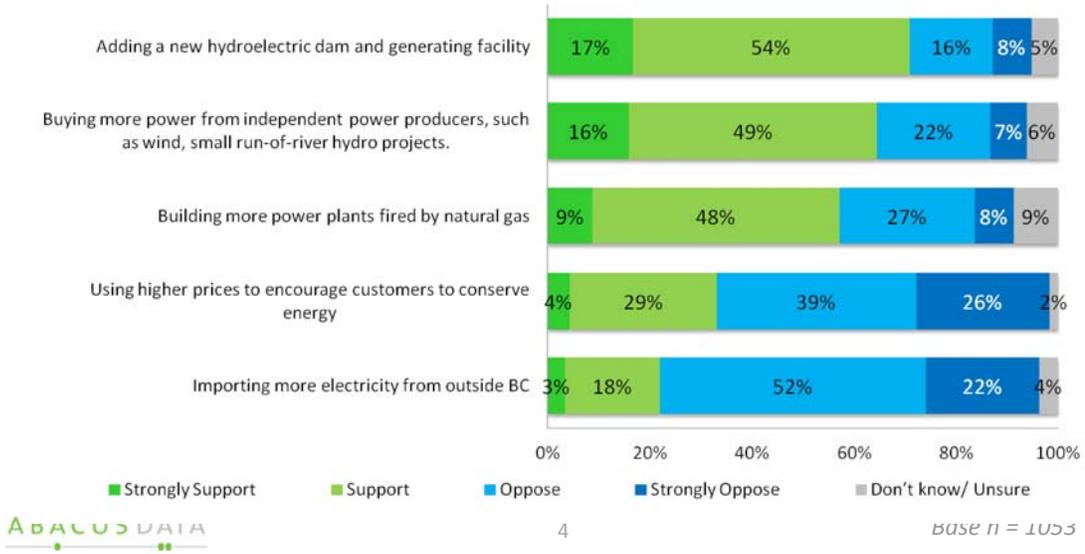
To meet a projected 40% increase in demand for electricity, respondents were asked how they felt about four different alternatives. Among the options tested, building a major new dam was the most popular, supported by 71%. This is consistent with results to the same question posed on a survey last year, when 69% indicated that they favoured this idea.

Support levels are similar for the idea of buying more power from independent producers, such as wind and run of the river projects. Support is lower for natural gas power plants, importing electricity, or using higher prices to cause a reduction in demand.

Support for Approaches to Meet BC Energy Needs

Over the next 20 years, the population of BC is expected to grow by more than 1 million people. More people, along with growth in the economy, is expected to mean a 40% increase in the demand for electricity used by British Columbians.

To meet this increase in electricity demand, a number of different approaches may be required. Do you strongly support, support, oppose, or strongly oppose each of the following.



Awareness of Site C

Awareness of the Site C proposal has risen significantly, from 41% in the last wave of surveying to 62% in this study. In the North East, awareness has climbed from 78% to 90%.

The increased levels of awareness follow a period of heightened attention on the project due to public hearings and the release of a Joint Review Panel report on Site C.

Views of Site C

As in the past, most people in the province are prepared to support this project provided it meets a few key conditions. In total, 79% of those polled either support building Site C (49%), or can accept it under certain circumstances (30%), while 18% are opposed. These results are also consistent with results from the last wave in 2013 (84% total support, 13% opposition).

In the North/North East region, support (39%) and “can accept” (21%) is also the majority point of view (60%).

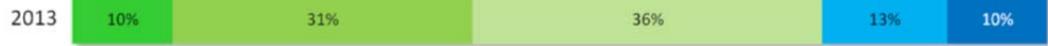
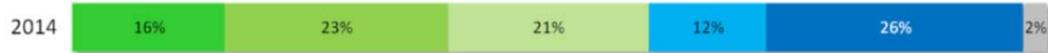
Support for Site C Project

Is the idea of building Site C, a new hydroelectric dam, to help meet the rising demand for electricity in BC, an idea you strongly support, support, can accept under certain circumstances, oppose, or strongly oppose?

British Columbia



North East



0% 20% 40% 60% 80% 100%

Strongly support Support Can accept under certain circumstances, Oppose Strongly oppose Don't Know/Unsure

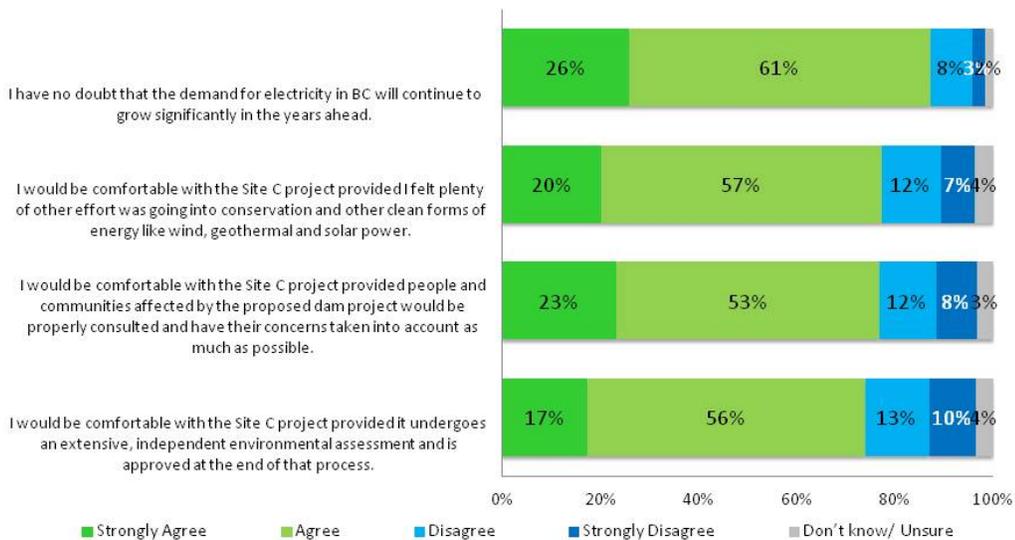
Surrounding Impressions

Additional probing in this survey revealed further details about the nature of views on this project proposal, as follows:

- The large majority (87%) has “no doubt that the demand for electricity in BC will continue to grow significantly in the years ahead”.
- 77% say they “would be comfortable with the Site C project provided I felt plenty of other effort was going into conservation and other clean forms of energy like wind, geothermal and solar power” (76% in North/North East).
- 76% say they would be comfortable with the Site C project “provided people and communities affected by the proposed dam project would be properly consulted and have their concerns taken into account as much as possible” (70% in North/North East).
- 73% would be comfortable with the project “provided it undergoes an extensive, independent environmental assessment and is approved at the end of that process” (69% in North/North East).

Views surrounding Site C Project

Based on what you have seen about the Site C project, do you agree or disagree with each of the following, or do you feel you do not know enough to say?



Conclusions

These results show that most British Columbians believe that demand for electricity will grow in the future and that building a new hydroelectric dam is a preferred way to meet rising energy demands.

Public support for any project of this sort and dimension is normally subject to conditions; this has been evident in surveys about Site C in the past and continues to be the case today.

Large majorities, including significant majorities in the region most directly affected, continue to indicate that they can support this project, provided they see

- Parallel effort put into conservation and other clean forms of energy
- Effort made to consult and take into account local community views
- A thorough, independent review process

The last several months have seen a significant increase in awareness of the Site C project. Rising awareness of a major infrastructure project often comes with rising levels of opposition. However, in the case of Site C, this is not the case. While there has been some increase in concern about the project, particularly in the North East, the overall picture of opinion in the province remains supportive. And it remains the case that most people in the North East believe a hydro dam is the preferred approach to meeting the province's growing electricity needs.