

Huu-ay-aht First Nations to build clean-energy power plant with \$500,000 equity funding

A hydroelectric project is underway at Sarita River, in Huu-ay-aht First Nations' Treaty Settlement lands. Huu-ay-aht First Nations received \$500,000 in equity funding from the BC Government's First Nations Clean Energy Business Fund, and is using the funding to establish a one hundred percent Huu-ay-aht-owned clean-energy power plant. The five mega-watt project could generate an annual average of 14.8 gigawatt hours of electricity, enough to power more than 1,300 homes.



*HFN Councillor Trevor Cootes and Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation Scott Fraser*

The process began in 2012 with \$40,000 of capacity funding from the First Nations Clean Energy Business Fund. In 2016, another \$10,000 was granted towards the completion of a ground survey. Power plant construction is expected to begin in spring 2019, with commercial operations commencing in 2020. Huu-ay-aht First Nations is also negotiating the sale of plant-generated electric power to BC Hydro, which would produce, on average, a gross revenue of more than two million dollars per year.

Huu-ay-aht First Nations and British Columbia government representatives gathered in Anacortes on May 4<sup>th</sup>, 2018 to formally announce and celebrate the project. Chief Councillor Robert

Dennis began the ceremony, welcoming Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation Scott Fraser to Huu-ay-aht's ḥahuuḷi, or traditional territories. "This contribution is B.C.'s commitment to work with Huu-ay-aht First Nations," Dennis stated. "It also represents B.C. efforts to make B.C. better, for British Columbians and [for] Huu-aya-aht citizens. The good working relationship we have with Minister Fraser has enabled this economic development opportunity," he emphasized.



*Robert Dennis; Wišqii; Trevor Cootes; Stephen Rayner; Scott Fraser*

Councillor Trevor Cootes, who holds the Economic Development portfolio, spoke to Huu-ay-aht's sustainable economic priorities. "We are working with BC Hydro to get an electricity purchase agreement in place, and it will provide us with the market security to ensure long-term viability of this project," stated Councillor Cootes, as cited in Ha-shilth-sa (Plummer, May 4 2018). "When we get this energy purchase agreement we can move forward with this project. It's something that's a good long-term investment for Huu-ay-aht and for the Bamfield community as well." (Ibid).

Scott Fraser, who is also the MLA for Mid-Island Pacific Rim, spoke to the project as a sign of Treaty success and of Huu-ay-aht First Nations' successful self-government. Wišqii, speaker for Huu-ay-aht's Tayii Ḥawīḷ, ḷiīšin (Derek Peters), spoke of the Nations' gratitude for the business

relationships that make the project possible. He described HUU-ay-aht as “people of resilience . . . adaptive to change,” and closed the ceremony with a song and a blessing for safe travels.