



To: Courtney Kirk, CAO

From: Evangeline Hanuse, Planning Coordinator

Meeting Date: August 10, 2020

Subject: Referral – Waterpower application

Recommendation:

THAT the Board of Directors of the Central Coast Regional District receives the report.

SUMMARY:

This is an application over Crown land for an Investigative License. The purpose is to conduct surveys, feasibility studies, assessments, site investigations and collect water data to determine the viability of water resource and the potential for future development and generation of energy from water. Zero to minimal disturbance on the land is anticipated during the term of investigative license. There is also an application for a Water Licence, under the Water Act.

BACKGROUND:

Nuxalk Nation, who's traditional territory covers the Bella Coola Valley and beyond, is proposing to develop a Nation-owned hydropower project on Nooklikonnik Creek. This project will seek to reduce Nuxalk Nation's (and the Bella Coola Valley's) reliance on diesel generated power produced by BC Hydro and enhance community energy sustainability, resilience and well-being.

The run of river hydropower facility is proposed on Nooklikonnik Creek, located east of Bella Coola (near Hagensborg) and south of Highway 20. An initial feasibility study was conducted for several watersheds throughout Nuxalk territory, with the assessment indicating that Nooklikonnik Creek offered the greatest project viability in terms of flow requirements, infrastructure development, existing infrastructure utilization, topographical conditions, diesel power displacement, and financial viability. The project concept involves the development of an intake, penstock, powerhouse, a power line for the purpose of interconnection, and associated access roads along the west side of the creek.

Flood protection measures constructed in the lower reaches of Nooklikonnik Creek (below the potential powerhouse location) have resulted in impacts to fisheries habitat, though various fish species have been observed in the lower reaches of the creek. From discussions with community knowledge keepers and the Nuxalk Guardians, a fish barrier is expected just downstream of the proposed powerhouse, with no fish expected above this barrier. As part of the investigative stage, a creek assessment will be completed to assess the potential for fish occurrence within the project area (above the expected fish barrier). Assessment of the creek will help determine the environmental flow needs, which will in turn impact the viability and development of the hydropower facility. Hydrometric gauging was installed on Nooklikonnik Creek during the initial feasibility study to collect stream flow data and develop a stage discharge curve. Additional discharge measurements will be taken during the investigative phase, especially during lower flows, to confirm the stage discharge curve and help in determining environmental flow needs. While the west side of the creek appears to be more suitable for construction, this will be confirmed through further site reconnaissance and geohazard site review.

CONCLUSION:

Although the deadline has passed for the referral response, the Clean Energy Team with the Nuxalk Nation is interested in receiving a support letter for the project. The writer can give a verbal update on activities surrounding this project.

REFERRAL DETAILS:

Waterpower

Referral Number: 123908912 - 004

Reference Number: Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations / 1415004

Request Sent: June 23, 2020

Response Due: July 23, 2020

You are invited to comment on the following Crown land Industrial application. A response is optional. If no response is received by the deadline, the application and adjudication process will move ahead.

This is a Crown Land Licence of Occupation application for Waterpower – Investigative Phase purposes.

Proponent: Nuxalk Nation

Agent: John Kenney, Urban Systems Ltd.

Legal Description: District Lots 123, 127 and 453, along with those parts of District Lots 1096 and 1097; unsurveyed Crown land in the vicinity of Necleetsconnay River, all of Range 3, Coast District.

Schedule/Term of Proposal: 5 years

CCRD Mandate for Service Delivery:

Section 460 of the *Local Government Act* (LGA) requires local governments to consider applications for amendments to OCPs and zoning bylaws, and permits issued under Part 14 (including development permits, temporary use permits, development variance permits, tree cutting permits)

Submitted by: _____
Evangeline Hanuse, Planning Coordinator

Reviewed by: _____
Courtney Kirk, Chief Administrative Officer