

**In the matter of the
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT ACT
S.B.C. 2002, c. 43
(Act)**

and

**in the matter of an
APPLICATION
for an
Environmental Assessment Certificate
(Application)**

by

**MEIKLE WIND ENERGY LIMITED PARTNERSHIP
(Proponent)**

for the

**Meikle Wind Energy Project
(Project)**

Reasons for Ministers' Decision

Pursuant to Section 17(3)(c) of the Act, we, the Minister of Environment and the Minister of Energy and Mines (Ministers), have issued an environmental assessment (EA) certificate for the Project. This document provides a record of the factors that we considered, and the rationale for our decision.

1. NATURE AND SCOPE OF THE DECISION

Section 17(3) of the Act sets out the parameters for our decision. We:

- were required to consider Environmental Assessment Office's (EAO's) *Meikle Wind Energy Project Assessment Report* (Assessment Report) and accompanying Recommendations of the Executive Director; and
- considered any other matters we thought relevant to the public interest in making our decision on the Application.

We also needed to be satisfied that the Province had met its duty to consult, and if appropriate, accommodate First Nations with respect to potential impacts of the Project on their Treaty rights.

2. MINISTERS' CONSIDERATIONS

2.1. Assessment Report, Certified Project Description and Recommended Conditions

EAO, with advice from the Project Working Group, reviewed the Application and additional information provided during the Application review and documented its findings in the Assessment Report. EAO is satisfied that the 24 recommended conditions and project design aspects specified in the Certified Project Description will prevent or reduce potential adverse environmental, social, economic, heritage or health impacts of the Project, such that no significant adverse effects are expected.

EAO is satisfied that the Crown's duty to consult and accommodate First Nations has been discharged for the Project.

2.2. Recommendations of the Executive Director

The Executive Director of EAO considered the Assessment Report, the Certified Project Description and the recommended conditions. The Executive Director recommended that an EA certificate be issued for the Project.

2.3. Key Considerations

The Project adds to the diversity of clean energy sources for BC. In addition, the following issues were key considerations in our decision to issue an EA certificate for the Project:

Mitigation through Project Design

Project design changes made during Application review, together with the application of best management practices and mitigation measures required in the Certified Project Description and recommended conditions resulted in reductions in habitat disturbance, stream crossings and visual effects and avoidance of established northern caribou low-elevation Ungulate Winter Range.

Bird and Bat Monitoring and Adaptive Management Plan

The Proponent must implement a Monitoring and Adaptive Management Plan for Birds and Bats (MAMP) that was finalized during Application review. The MAMP includes creation of a technical advisory committee with First Nation participation; pre and post operational monitoring requirements; real-time mitigation measures with triggers for Proponent action and reporting; creation of a predictive model to understand bat mortality; and a suite of adaptive management strategies ranging from adjusting turbine start-up speeds to temporarily shutting down problem turbines. The MAMP also includes Proponent requirements to scientific research related to bats including preserving bat hair or tissue samples to be made available should a genetic study be undertaken to understand regional populations and their movement patterns.

First Nations

EAO and the Proponent consulted with the McLeod Lake Indian Band and the Doig River, Halfway River, Moberly Lake and Saulteau First Nations as described in Part C of the Assessment Report. Upon review of the Assessment Report and in particular pages 86 to 101 that describe the issues raised by First Nations and potential impacts of the Project to the Treaty right to fish, hunt and trap, we are satisfied that the consultation duty has been met and that accommodations, including conditions and design restrictions identified as part of the EA certificate, are appropriate.

3. CONCLUSION

After consideration of the findings of the Assessment Report, Project design aspects and recommended conditions of the proposed EA certificate, Recommendations of the Executive Director, and the key considerations as outlined in section 2 of these Reasons for Ministers' Decision, and having regard to our responsibilities under the Act, we issued an EA certificate for the Project. The EA certificate includes legally enforceable conditions which gives us confidence to conclude that the Project will be constructed, operated and decommissioned in a way that no significant adverse effects are likely to occur. We note that the Project will be subject to applicable permits and authorizations before the Project can proceed.



Honourable Mary Polak
Minister of Environment



Honourable Bill Bennett
Minister of Energy and Mines

Signed this 24 day of June, 2014