

## Lutsel K'e Dene First Nation

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May 10, 2010

Alan Ehrlich  
Senior Environmental Assessment Officer  
Mackenzie Valley Environment Impact Review Board  
Box 938  
5102, 50<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Yellowknife, NT  
X1A 2N7

Dear Mr. Ehrlich:

Re: Lutsel K'e Dene First Nation Final Submission on Deze Proposed Transmission Route

Lutsel K'e Dene First Nation is opposing the East Arm routing of the Taltson hydro expansion because it is a matter of cultural survival. As stated at the public hearing on January 14th "the proposed transmission line cannot be constructed in the Desnedche-Kache area" (Desnedche is the Lockhart River from Artillery Lake to Great Slave Lake is, and Kache refers to the area at east end of Great Slave Lake including Maufelly and Fairchild Points ). "This area is off limits to development, it is the most important sacred and cultural site of the Lutsel K'e Dene people."

"The main problem is that this area is the number one cultural no-go zone for developments for the Lutsel K'e Dene. The area doesn't embody just a few stories with symbolic hold, but the very being of the people is interwoven into this land, today, now, this minute. The power of Ts akui Theda is living here in this room as these people speak of her Ts akui Theda water can be collected, brought back with the people to their homes for the vibrancy it brings into the home and the healing powers of the land it embodies. The Lutsel K'e Dene are impacted by the very thought of this area being developed and it is causing stress and harm to them as they sit here and every – for every day that they're met with the challenges that of having to defend the continued sanctity of this area into the future. The continue to desire -- the continued desire for industry to develop this area lobbied through the Government and through this EA process is seen as the highest form of disrespect."

The community is involved in studies and all sorts of work in the area. There – this area is full of burial sites, cabin sites, seasonal harvesting sites, legend locations, as well as petro forms which I use to describe rocks or rock alignments that can be shaped as animals or things that tell a story which help to inform which is often described as a cultural landscape. There are special

sites within this area known only to the Dene and that will remain so for generations to come. The area cannot be subject to microanalysis compartmentalized by zoning, identified by the creation of safe corridors, or given any other semantic jargon, piece-mealing, or instituting of any ad hoc buffer zones to satisfy what would be deemed adequate protection measures for the Lutsel K'e Dene. There is no identifying areas....that would mitigate the overall negative impacts of the staging and construction of transmission line towers over, through, or across the Desnedche-Kache area. The area is slated for protection at this moment and that means the entire area." "Our technical later -- letter dated December 15th gives understanding and depth to a historical chronology that is but a small window into the message that the Lutsel K'e Dene have repeated about this area now for almost forty (40) years in various different venues and for different reasons. It is off limits to development of any kind." "It's like -- like striking out our traditional values. If you cross that area it -- it's no longer having meaning and spiritual values for us as a Dene."

Dr. Brenda Parlee used academic studies to support Lutsel K'e's position. "Chandler and Lalonde (1998) over many years examined why some First Nations communities experience dramatically higher rates of social illness (suicide) than the national average (150 times higher) while other First Nations communities in British Columbia experience virtually no suicide. After examining all available statistical data on the socio-economic conditions of communities, they were surprised to discover that income, employment and education did not matter or were in some cases inversely related to suicide outcomes. What mattered instead was the level or extent of cultural continuity or self-determination in the community. Their research, it is established that: "bands that ... have met with measurable success in recovering community control over their civic lives (ie. that, in addition to having taken concrete steps to preserve their cultural past, have achieved a measure of self-government, have effectively militated for aboriginal title to traditional lands, and have gained a measure of control over their health, education, child protection and jural systems) suffer no youth suicide, while those who fail to meet all or most of these standards of self-determination have youth suicide rates more than 150 times the national average" (Chandler and Lalonde 2004: 2).

The work is significant in its dismissal of conventional indicators of "development" (employment, education, income) as important to health. Due to large number of communities involved, the length of time in which the study was undertaken and the quantitative (epidemiological) approach of those involved, the study also goes beyond the case study scale of understanding of health and self-determination. The study is particularly significant in its affirmation of First Nations efforts to assert their rights to lands and resources. Based on my knowledge of the study, and my knowledge of the factors influencing the health and well-being of northern communities and specifically Lutsel K'e, I believe the results are generalizable to the context of Lutsel K'e and similar communities attempting to assert control over the way in which development takes place on their traditional lands.

In my opinion, should the proposed project be allowed to proceed in the traditional territory of Lutsel K'e Dene First Nation, without their consent, it amounts to a contradiction in the efforts of the community to assert their rights and self-determination and maintain the cultural well-being of the community. In that context, an

approval of the proposed project is likely to have an impact on the community similar to those identified by Chandler and Lalonde. Among the members of the community particularly at risk from these efforts to undermine local self-determination are the local youth. As noted by Chandler and Lalonde, youth of any culture are at risk for problems such as suicide and other high risk behaviors due to the emotional and mental health sensitivities associated with adolescence. It is for this reason that the statistics on suicide are so high among youth between the ages of 15 and 24 years. Chandler and Lalonde (1998) follow by suggesting that Aboriginal youth may be doubly at risk for suicide due to the discontinuities (disruptions) that have historically and continue to take place in their socio-cultural worlds (e.g. residential schools, disconnect between media images and local realities). In my opinion, many Aboriginal youth in the north may also be in a position of triple jeopardy due to the fact that their identity, is not only linked to their personal and sociocultural worlds but is also closely linked to the health and sustainability of their land and resources. Many youth, particularly young men, identify closely with caribou and caribou hunting, even if they themselves are not practicing caribou hunters. If disruptions in self and community (culture) can manifest in the kinds of health problems described by Chandler and Lalonde (1998), a disruption or threat to the 'land' (for example caribou) can compound such vulnerability in many devastating ways including suicide, drug and alcohol use and other high risk behaviors. The quote below from a community member from 1998 provides additional perspective: "The Treaties are not being followed. The land is not being protected ... there has been no consent from us yet the mining goes ahead. This ends up with the community being upset. We try and talk about it but some people feel they can't do anything about it. They get used to not having control so they don't come to meetings or don't learn what is going on. They don't want to think about it (not having control) – they keep it inside"

Caribou impacts is another problem. The Proponent is planning a winter road to Nonacho Lake from Fort Smith. They say that they are going to control access to the winter road and block it from use after the construction period is over, however, it is well known that a road, once constructed, will remain in use particularly for snowmobiles for years to come. We strongly disagree with Golder's assessment that snowmobiling long distances will not likely happen. We are in a better situation than Golder Associates to know this, because we frequently have snowmobilers from Yellowknife, Fort Resolution and Bechecko hunting in our territory, which is a greater distance than Fort Smith to Nonacho Lake.

Carbon footprint analysis done by the Proponent should be offered to the Public Registry.

Spring and summer, and fall field monitoring studies with regard to migratory birds should be mandatory and some of the other recommendations that were offered regarding migratory birds and the studies lacking therein.

Further, we would like to identify conflict of interest issues. Daryl Bohnet currently sits on the Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board and also is a board member who sits on the Executive Committee of the NWT Métis Development Corporation which has interests in the Deze Energy proposal being considered. Also, James Wah-Shee is currently a board member for Deze Energy's parent corporation, the NWT Power Corporation, while also sitting on the

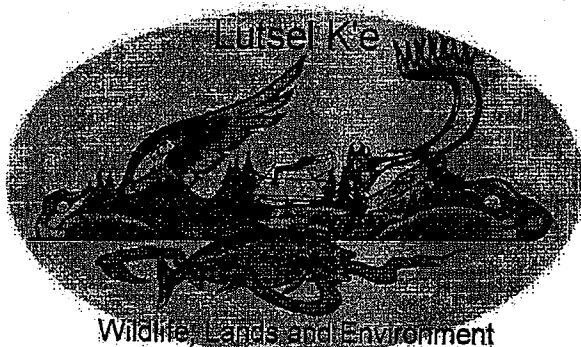
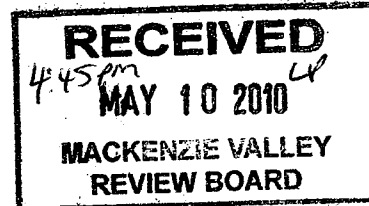
MVEIRB hearing this case. These clear conflicts of interests jeopardizes the fairness of MVEIRB's processes.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Antoine Michel', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Chief Antoine Michel

FE



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To: Alan Ehrlich From: Sonya Almond -Administrative Assistant  
Fax: 867-766-7074 Pages: 5 + Cover Page  
Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: May 10/2010  
Re: LKDFN-Final Submission CC:  
on Deze Proposed Transmission  
Route

Urgent  For Review  Please Review  Please Recycle

• COMMENT