Meeting #3 Summary - Technical Advisory Group for the Springbank Off-Stream Reservoir Project

Meeting information:

Date: July 10 and 11, 2018
Host: Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency (the Agency)
Location: Fish Creek Provincial Park, Calgary, Alberta
Participants:
City of Calgary
Environment and Climate Change Canada
Ermineskin Cree Nation
Fisheries and Oceans Canada
JFK Law (representing Kainai Nation and Ermineskin Cree Nation)
Health Canada
Louis Bull Tribe
Métis Nation of Alberta – Region 3
Montana First Nation
Rocky View County
Samson Cree Nation
Stoney Nakoda Nations

Meeting context and objectives:

This document summarizes the topics and discussion points of the third Technical Advisory Group meeting for the Springbank Off-Stream Reservoir Project (the Project). The objectives of the two day session were:

- for the Agency to describe the issues and concerns that were brought forth in the technical review of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS); and
- for the Technical Advisory Group to provide input and advice to the Agency on information requests for the proponent based off the technical review of the EIS.

Meeting Summary

Agency Presentation

The Agency provided an overview of next steps in the federal environmental assessment process including:

- Information on drafting technical information requests, review of information request responses, and the possibility of asking follow up questions to the responses.

- Comment period and possible Technical Advisory Group meeting on the draft Environmental Assessment Report and potential conditions.
- Decision Statement and legally enforceable conditions issued by the Minister of Environment and Climate Change.
- Compliance and enforcement.

Discussion Summary

Discussion points, including concerns and recommendations, are summarized below and organized by topic. These views do not represent the views of the Agency or consensus by the Technical Advisory Group.

Overarching Discussion

- Western science and Indigenous knowledge should be considered in the Environmental Impact Statement review.
- An Indigenous worldview should be used as the basis of environmental assessment, instead of as a model to consider.
- Information should be accessible, both in terms of format and language.
- Indigenous groups want to be active partners for the lifespan of the Project, including Indigenous monitoring.
- Plans are not adequate mitigation. Detailed plans need to be discussed and understood prior to construction.
- Communication and notification plans are needed to ensure safety of the surrounding communities.
- Clarity and commitment on the intended future use of the Project as flood mitigation and not more permanent water storage.
- Selection of regional study areas and whether these allowed for full assessment of effects to Indigenous peoples and federal lands.
- Uncertainty with Project design, probable maximum flood scenarios, drainage, residency times

Land Use, Rights, Physical and Cultural Heritage, Health and Socio-economic conditions

- Effects to land use and associated impacts to rights and appropriate methods for assessing these effects. Any information regarding land use and impacts to rights needs to be informed by Indigenous knowledge, adequate baseline, and traditional land use studies.
- Methodology for the assessment of impacts to rights developed by the Mikisew Cree First Nation and the Agency for the Frontier Oil Sands Mine Project should be used by Alberta Transportation to help assess potential impacts to rights from the Project.
- Changes to access to land for the traditional purposes and the exercise of rights.
- Land use designations or plans that support Indigenous access.
- Effects to navigation.
- Effects to physical and cultural heritage, including cumulative effects and protocols for chance finds.

- Habitat change and fragmentation and effects to culturally important, including elk, grizzly, wild horses, and bison.
- Availability of and access to country foods.
- Odour from Project construction.
- Ceremonies prior to any works being undertaken.
- Accommodation for Indigenous Peoples.
- Resource sharing.

Hydrogeology

- Effects (including from debris and storage) to surface and ground water quality and subsequent changes to drinking water, fish and fish habitat, use of fish by Indigenous People, and the use of fish for food.
- Methodology and boundaries for hydrogeology assessment and the requirements for an accurate assessment of potential effects to groundwater on Tsuut'ina IR 145.

Hydrology and Surface Water Quality & Quantity

- Project effects to aquatic environment including to the Elbow River morphology, fish, fish habitat, and benthic environments due to potential changes in temperature, sediment, water quality, and fish diversion into reservoir.
- Context of the Project including water needs, drinking water advisories, past flooding, and water management on reserves.
- Water as a life force required to support the exercise of rights.
- Pathways to human health through contamination of water.
- Cumulative effects assessment to hydrology and the need to include Bragg Creek Flood Mitigation Project.
- Description of continuous water quality monitoring including scheduling and parameters.
- Introduction of herbicides, tackifier, other chemicals into the water as part of infrastructure management.

Fish and Fish Habitat

- Methodology for the assessment of fish including timing, level, and detail of the fish sampling conducted, and baseline information requirements.
- Link to rights, current use, and health and socio-economic conditions (e.g. food security).
- Information needs regarding fish protection plans.
- Effects to fish populations and projected mortality rates, during all phases of the Project.
- Context of the Project including commitments the Provincial Water for Life Strategy regarding fish and fish habitat in the Elbow River system.
- Ecological role of fish.
- Risk of methylmercury accumulation in the food chain.

Migratory Birds and Species at Risk

- Methodology including the inclusion of Indigenous knowledge and baseline information requirements. Mitigations measures and monitoring to include Indigenous knowledge and participation.
- Long-term quantitative effects to migratory bird habitat from Project infrastructure.
- Effects of hydrologic drawdowns on nesting or amphibian habitat.