

Watt's Happening? #270



Written by Don Pettit and Joanne Dueck
for Peace Energy Cooperative, Dawson Creek, BC Canada
www.peaceenergy.ca

A letter to Premier Eby

The truth about wind power in BC



This photo was taken shortly after Bear Mountain Wind Park was commissioned in 2009. Joanne Dueck (in orange) and family (seated) help capture the excitement and optimism that BC's first wind facility generated among Peace Energy Co-op's members and the BC public. Now, where is wind energy going in BC? It's hard to say...

Although some 1500 megawatts (MW) of wind energy have recently been approved in British Columbia, this province has not always been a promoter of wind energy, as so clearly articulated in Joanne Dueck's letter to our Premier, copied below.

Joanne is a long-time member of Peace Energy Co-op and was there during our long and difficult 6-year journey creating Bear Mountain Wind Park, BC's first commercial wind facility.

Two full years of environmental studies were required before we could break ground, plus another one-year follow up study after construction. We even voluntarily extended the follow up to two years!

Peace Energy and our partner Aeolis Wind Power were fine with this. This is the way wind should

be developed, with respect for the land, the local environment, First Nations and local residents.

Peace Energy hosted some 30 public meetings for the project, educating and addressing concerns. Now, it looks like all environmental studies are being waived for the province's new round of wind development. Fast, but not wise.

After roughly another 400 MW of wind were successfully built in the Peace Region, the government of the day put an abrupt end to their call for clean power, suddenly ending BC's rapidly growing wind industry just when it was starting to take off (some 10,000 MW of wind are still here waiting to be harvested!) citing the strange reason that wind power was too expensive (it is the second cheapest power on the planet, next to solar).

Shortly thereafter, they announced the very controversial building of the Site C dam on the Peace River (now that's expensive electricity!!) and the rapid development of frack gas in the region for export to Asia as liquefied natural gas (LNG). Wow, talk about a 180!

Although originally denied, it was later admitted that the 1100 MW of Site C were not going to electrify the province, but instead would be used to electrify (and green wash!) LNG, a very high-carbon fuel. Makes you wonder where the new wind power will go, doesn't it?

I'll let Joanne take it from here:

July 31, 2025

*The Honourable David Eby, KC
Premier of British Columbia
Office of the Premier
PO Box 9041 Stn Prov Govt
Victoria, BC V8W 9E1*

*Subject: BC's Wind Power Future Requires Honesty
About Its Past and Support for Grassroots Leadership*

Dear Premier Eby,

I was heartened to hear your recent public comments promoting British Columbia as a "pro-wind power jurisdiction." In contrast to the absurd and anti-scientific rhetoric recently expressed by U.S. President Trump about turbine blades being incompatible with the Earth, your message was a welcome signal to those of us who care deeply about a sustainable, renewable energy future.

That said, I must be frank: BC's track record in supporting wind energy and independent renewable power producers (IPPs) over the past decade does not support this claim. In fact, many would say the opposite is true. For nearly ten years, provincial energy policy has all but stalled the growth of wind energy in BC.

The Bear Mountain Wind Park stands today not because of robust government backing, but in spite of its absence. That project was realized through

the vision, persistence, and fundraising of local citizens—especially the members of the Peace Energy Cooperative—who believed in wind energy long before it was politically convenient. It was built without provincial fanfare or strategic support, even as non-renewable industries continued to receive significant subsidies and government endorsement.

I want to thank your government for issuing the recent Request for Proposals (RFP) for new renewable energy projects. It is a step in the right direction, and it signals that BC may be ready to re-engage meaningfully with the renewable sector. However, it must be noted that the RFP's tight timelines and financial requirements risk excluding exactly the kinds of small, community-led organizations that have been the backbone of innovation in BC's energy story.

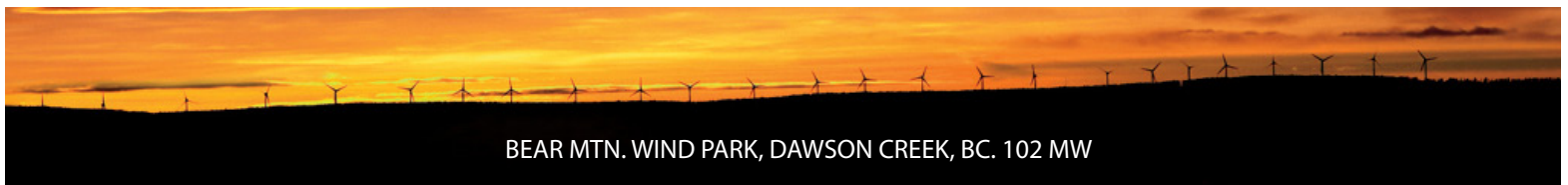
The Peace Energy Cooperative is one such example. In addition to helping bring Bear Mountain Wind to life, the Cooperative has played a pivotal role in developing Hudson's Hope's new municipal solar project—a first-of-its-kind initiative in BC. Projects like these demonstrate vision, community resilience, and what's possible when local leadership is empowered.

As BC moves forward, I urge your government to create space and opportunity for these smaller actors to participate fully in our energy future. Support for renewables must go beyond large-scale, corporate developments. It must include cooperatives, municipalities, and communities who are already doing the work—often without recognition or financial backing.

We cannot credibly position British Columbia as a leader in wind power while continuing to overlook or under-resource the people and groups who have laid the foundation for this transition. Climate action demands consistency, courage, and a commitment to equity—especially in who gets to participate.

*Sincerely,
Joanne Dueck
Peace Energy Cooperative Volunteer, Member, and
Former Board Director*

Thanks Joanne for so eloquently speaking truth to power.



BEAR MTN. WIND PARK, DAWSON CREEK, BC. 102 MW