



MEDIA RELEASE: For Immediate Release: 13 July 2016

10 Ontario Rivers Protected from 19 Hydroelectric Projects

SUDBURY: The Ontario Rivers Alliance (ORA) is celebrating a major victory in the protection of 10 Ontario rivers that have been under threat from 19 proposed hydroelectric projects. Actions taken by the ORA and its members have led to what was considered to be impossible – the termination of 19 Feed-in-Tariff (FIT) Contracts.

In 2011, ORA came into being to address a rash of 87 proposed hydroelectric proposals initiated under the Green Energy Act. The offer of generous incentives to produce power during peak demand hours had proponents rushing to claim access to falls and rapids on rivers all across the province. The number of proposals to actually receive FIT Contracts was soon reduced to 41, and of those, Xeneca Power Development Inc. had secured 19 contracts for projects involving 23 Crown sites on 10 Ontario rivers.

“The proponent’s favourite mantra was, ‘It’s a done deal – there’s nothing you can do about it.’ Unfortunately, under the current legislation there is no possibility of a “no” outcome; however, not easily deterred, a group of concerned citizens and organizations banded together to create one unified voice to speak up for Ontario rivers – that was the beginning of ORA”, said Linda Heron, Chair of the ORA.

Peaking incentives encourage proponents to hold water back in reservoirs to produce power during peak demand hours. These types of operations can and do result in numerous negative impacts, not the least of which are increased methylmercury contamination of fish, blue-green algae, and methane emissions. *“Hydroelectric is not clean and green, such as proponents and governments would have us believe”,* said Heron.

In that first year, through ORA and member actions, and by following the regulatory process, three of this proponent’s Environmental Reports (ER) were rejected because they did not meet the requirements of the Class Environmental Assessment for Waterpower, and the proponent was ordered to go back to complete additional work and studies. On the 7th of July 2015, another ER, the fourth in a row, was rejected for the very same reason, and records show that by the 9th of July 2015 the proponent had terminated all 19 of its FIT Contracts.

As Heron informed, “Unfortunately, ORA had to file a Freedom of Information Application to learn of this important development. While these 19 FIT Contracts had been terminated almost a year ago, stakeholders were left to twist in the wind, and tax dollars wasted as regulators continued to work on files that had no chance of proceeding. A power procurement contract is necessary to produce power in Ontario, and once a contract is terminated, it cannot be reinstated.”

Ontario rivers protected: Matawin, Vermilion, Petawawa, Wanapitei, Blanche, Ivanhoe, Frederick House, Kapuskasing, Larder, and Serpent Rivers.



ORA would like to thank our members, First Nations, and local communities for their help and support in protecting Ontario rivers.

ORA was also recently granted Intervenor Status by the National Energy Board with regard to panel hearings for the Energy East Pipeline application.

To learn more about the impacts of hydroelectric you can check out our report, "[Hydro Impacts 101 – The Trade-offs](#)".

ORA is a Not-for-Profit grassroots organization acting as a voice for several stewardships, associations, and private and First Nation citizens who have come together to protect, conserve and restore healthy river ecosystems. www.OntarioRiversAlliance.ca

- 30 -

For more information:

Linda Heron, Chair

Ontario Rivers Alliance

LindaH@OntarioRiversAlliance.ca

(705) 866-1677 or (705) 561-9027