



Tsartlip First Nation
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August 11, 2021

BC Hydro
333 Dunsmuir
Vancouver, BC, V6B 5R3

BY EMAIL
lindsay.thompson@bchydro.com

Attention: Lindsay Thompson, Director of Indigenous Relations

Dear Ms. Thompson:

Re: BC Hydro Removal and Displacement of Tsartlip Artifacts

We write further to your recent discussions in early August with Victor Rumbolt, our Administrator, and Brad Janvier, our Capital Projects Manager regarding work BC Hydro carried out on our Mayne Island 6 in June and July 2021 in relation to the Active Pass Submarine Cable Project.

In those discussions, we were made aware that BC Hydro had entered onto our Mayne Island reserve to do work which included the installation of power poles at the eastern edge of our reserve. BC Hydro proceeded with the work on the basis that its consultant had apparently invited Tsartlip to participate, and because that consultant said they received no response, BC Hydro assumed Tsartlip had no concerns about BC Hydro proceeding with the work. This was not the case.

We were informed, after the fact, that BC Hydro discovered and removed roughly 20 artifacts from our reserve lands, some which your consultants have indicated are over 2000 years old. A further artifact which we believe arose from the BC Hydro disturbance washed up nearby on the Mayne Island Campground around August 3, 2021, and was given to our Administrator.

We are shocked, saddened and appalled that BC Hydro's unilateral action has resulted in the disturbance of our historical property, all without our knowledge or consent, and without any consultation whatsoever. Artifacts found in our traditional territory are a part of our history and identity, and they tell the story of who we are as a people, both in their physical existence as well as the location in where they have been. By making the decision to move the artifacts from their location where they could have been resting for over 2000 years also erases pieces of our history. For BC Hydro to disturb and remove pieces of our culture and history as if they are objects simply in the way of BC Hydro's important work is callous, deeply damaging to us and demonstrates a deep disrespect to us as WSANEC people. And Tsartlip was not even told about this discovery until our Administrator contacted BC Hydro to express concern over the work that our membership noticed was done.

BC Hydro must take steps to make this right, and until that occurs BC Hydro is not authorized to continue any further works of any kind on Mayne Island 6. We outline the preliminary steps we expect BC Hydro to take below.

First, BC Hydro needs to contact us immediately to arrange a culturally appropriate way of returning the artifacts taken from our lands, and provide us with all relevant reports with respect to the artifacts discovered and the work recently performed. This will allow us to assess the extent of the damages we have suffered and consider our options going forward.

Second, BC Hydro must construct a gate surrounding the easement area in order to prevent any further trespassing, and any further damage to our historical property. This must happen as soon as possible.

Third, in order to avoid any further similar incidents in the future, we need to negotiate and implement a protocol agreement that sets out how communications and referrals will take place, and what our relationship will be going forward. BC Hydro must provide capacity funding to Tsartlip in order to develop such an agreement.

Finally, the easement passing through Mayne Island 6 which we assume BC Hydro is acting under dates from the 1960s, and is woefully deficient as compared to modern standards. This must be renegotiated to reflect current laws and practices, and include language dealing with the discovery of artifacts, use of contaminants, the relocation of works, or remedies in the case of default. BC Hydro must also provide capacity funding for this endeavour.

These types of disturbances of our culture should never happen, and BC Hydro must meet with Chief and Council as soon as possible to discuss these issues, and a way forward with our relationship. Please contact Victor Rumbolt, our Administrator, to arrange such a meeting.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Regards,
Tsartlip First Nation
Per:



Chief Don Tom

c.c. Debbie Seto-Kitson (debbie.seto@bchydro.com)