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Ministère
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July 6, 2015

ENV1283MC-2015-1001

Bala Ontario P0C 1A0

Dear M

Thank you for your recent email of April 16, 2015 to the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change, the Honourable Glen Murray regarding your concerns with Swift River Energy Limited's North Bala Small Hydro Project in Bala, Township of Muskoka Lakes. I am pleased to reply on behalf of the Minister.

The Environmental Assessment requirements for electricity projects are set out in Ontario Regulation 116/01, the Electricity Projects regulation, made under the *Environmental Assessment Act*. The requirements are based on the expected environmental effects of an electricity project and apply equally to the private and public sectors.

The North Bala Small Hydro Project has completed the Environmental Screening Process as required under O.Reg.116/01. The Environmental Screening Report and Addendum have identified the potential environmental effects of this project, documented consultation with agencies and members of the public and aboriginal communities, and outlined relevant potential measures to mitigate or manage environmental effects.

Concerns have been raised that Swift River Energy Limited has made changes to the North Bala Small Hydro Project that warrant additional study. Under the Environmental Screening Process, where there are changes made to a project after it has completed the process, the proponent is required to assess the significance of those changes, and where there are significant changes, additional study would be required. In response to the concerns raised, the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change asked Swift River Energy Limited to review its proposed changes in accordance with the Environmental Screening Process. Swift River Energy Limited's assessment has determined that the changes are minor and that no further study is required. The ministry has reviewed and is satisfied with this assessment. Swift River Energy Limited's response to the concerns was posted on its website:
www.balafalls.ca/ea.html.

Attached for your reference is the Minister's January 23, 2013 letter indicating that the North Bala Small Hydro Project has been planned and developed in accordance with the *Environmental Assessment Act*. This decision was made after giving careful consideration to the issues raised in the requests, the project documentation, the provisions of the Environmental Screening Process, and other relevant matters required to be considered under subsection 16(4) of the *Environmental Assessment Act*. The Minister's decision is final. Swift River Energy Limited may proceed with the North Bala Small Hydro Project, subject to any other permits or approvals required from relevant agencies.

Thank you for bringing your concerns to the ministry's attention.

Yours sincerely,

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

Dolly Goyette
Director, Central Region
Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change

Attachment