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The Province, BC Hydro and Atlantic Power reach resolution for Northwest Energy Facility in Williams Lake

VANCOUVER: The Government of British Columbia, BC Hydro and Atlantic Power are pleased to announce a resolution that supports the continued operation of the Northwest Energy (NW Energy) biomass facility in Williams Lake. This collaborative effort ensures the sustained contribution of the facility to BC Hydro's winter capacity while supporting the local community and surrounding areas.

“This resolution is great news for the community of Williams Lake and the workers who make their living at Northwest Energy. Working together with Atlantic Power, and in collaboration with a cross-ministry government working group, BC Hydro has negotiated an agreement that will keep the facility operating into the future,” said Adrian Dix, Minister of Energy and Climate Solutions. “This biomass facility supports important jobs and provides economic benefits to Williams Lake and the surrounding community, and generates clean, firm electricity that we need to power homes and businesses across British Columbia and reduce carbon emissions.”

The challenge Atlantic Power's Northwest Energy facility was facing was due to a shortage of cost-effective fibre – the wood-waste it requires to burn as fuel to create electricity. The Province and BC Hydro have worked diligently and closely with Atlantic Power over the past many months to address these challenges. Through this collaborative work, Atlantic Power has been provided with a number of recommendations for optimizing their operations such as for sourcing and managing cost-effective fuel.

As a result of this collaborative work, Atlantic Power has rescinded its termination notice for the NW Energy Electricity Purchase Agreement with BC Hydro. The NW Energy facility will continue to operate for the remaining term of the agreement. This decision is crucial in maintaining the facility's role in benefiting the local economy and in providing clean and reliable energy for the province, especially during the winter months.

“We are pleased with this solution that will see Atlantic Power continue to operate its NW Energy facility in Williams Lake,” said Chris O'Riley, President and CEO of BC Hydro. “We appreciate the ongoing efforts of the working group and look forward to continuing our relationship with Atlantic Power.”

The NW Energy biomass facility has been an important part of the energy landscape in Williams Lake since the early 1990s, contributing to the local economy and providing employment opportunities. The facility's ongoing operation will continue to support Williams Lake and the surrounding communities, including local First Nations such as Tšideldel First Nation and Williams Lake First Nation.

The continued operation of the NW Energy facility aligns with the provincial government's broader goals of promoting renewable energy, supporting local economies and fostering strong partnerships with Indigenous communities. This resolution marks a positive step towards a sustainable and resilient energy future for British Columbia.



Quotes:

“The continued operation of the Northwest Energy biomass facility is great news for the workers, their families and all of Williams Lake and the surrounding communities,” said Ravi Parmar, Minister of Forests. “My ministry is committed to working with Atlantic Power to support fibre options in the area.”

“Thanks to all the parties for the diligent work done over the past months to arrive at this agreement,” said Diana Gibson, Minister of Jobs, Economic Development and Innovation. “It’s great to see such a positive outcome for the workers, their families and the regional economy.”

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