

# Canada scientists ask government to reconsider dam project

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More than 200 Canadian scientists are asking the government to reconsider a hydroelectric dam project in the western province of British Columbia, citing in part the rights of indigenous communities.

Although the Site C [project](#) on the Peace River has received federal cabinet approval and some required permits, "that does not mean that the Canadian and British Columbian governments cannot step back from the project," Royal Society of Canada president Maryse Lassonde said in an open letter addressed to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau.

The letter, date last Thursday, was only made public on Tuesday.

Lassonde said she was voicing the concerns of a group of scholars, including several members of the Royal Society of Canada. The society said "over 200 leading scientists" were involved.

"The Royal Society of Canada is deeply concerned about how that approval was achieved. Indeed, project approval goes against the Canadian government emphasis on evidence-based decision-making," Lassonde said in the letter.

The concerns included the fast-tracked approval process for Site C, as well as outstanding concerns regarding "First Nations treaty and Aboriginal rights," the letter said.

Aboriginal concerns were apparently not considered by the government

approval panel, while two First Nations court cases related to the dam are pending but construction is already underway, the letter said.

"Work on the Site C project should be discontinued for this reason alone."

Last year, subsidiaries of Spain's Acciona and South Korea's Samsung were part of a partnership that won the main civil works contract for the Site C dam, which is projected to have an overall cost of Can\$8.3 billion (\$6.3 billion US).

The civil works contract includes an earth fill [dam](#), two diversion tunnels and the foundation for the generating station and spillways.

Contracts still to be awarded include those for supplying turbines and generators, construction of power plants and transmission lines, and moving a highway.

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