

Brazil approves huge Amazon power plant

June 1 2011



A burnt tree lies down on a road along the Amazon rainforest, 270 Km far from Tailandia, in Para, northern Brazil. Brazilian environmental officials have given their blessing to construction of what will be the world's third largest hydro-electric plant and dam project to be built in the Amazon rainforest.

Brazilian environmental officials on Wednesday gave their blessing to construction of what will be the world's third largest hydro-electric plant and dam project to be built in the Amazon rainforest.

Over the strong objections of community activists, indigenous groups and [environmentalists](#), [federal authorities](#) gave a green light to the Belo Monte project to be built by the Norte Energia consortium of business interests.

The massive \$11 billion project is to be built in western Para state, along the Rio Xingu river in Brazil's [Amazon rainforest](#).

The Inter-American Human Right Commission, an arm of the

Organization of American States, had asked the government to halt construction to allow more time to hear objections from indigenous communities affected by the project.

"This criminal project will lead to the destruction of a large area of the rainforest, and will affect tens of thousands of people," said Antonia Melo, an indigenous leader.

The project was also opposed by American filmmaker James Cameron, whose blockbuster hit film "Avatar" told the story of a peaceful native people on another planet forced to wage a bloody fight against strip miners from Earth.

Once completed, the Belo Monte plant will generate some 11,200 [megawatts](#) of energy, equivalent to about 11 percent of the power currently produced in Brazil.

Officials said the first building stage will be finished in 2015, with construction expected to be completed in 2019.

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