



Canadian Hydropower
Association
Association canadienne
de l'hydroélectricité

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NEWS RELEASE

Canadian Hydropower Association and Species at Risk Act

CHA makes submission to review of SARA and calls for stewardship role for the hydropower industry in conservation agreements

Ottawa, June 4, 2009—At a meeting of the Parliamentary Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development, the Canadian Hydropower Association (CHA) made its presentation for the five year review of the Species at Risk Act (SARA)

“We are pleased to be invited to offer our comments during this review as the application of SARA has generated some uncertainty and concern for the hydropower industry,” said Jacob Irving, President of the Canadian Hydropower Association. “SARA’s current method for issuing temporary permits for activities that cause incidental harm can risk putting the hydropower industry into a position of unintended non-compliance. We believe this is something no one desires given that hydropower is a clean, renewable, low-emitting source of electricity that helps Canada in its fight against climate change.”

The CHA supports the protection of wildlife and the principles of SARA. Every hydropower installation that is now under construction goes through rigorous environmental assessments. Hydropower facilities are designed to minimize harm to fish with habitat improvements and fish-friendly turbines. Working with scientists and local communities, the hydropower industry has developed an expertise in protecting fish species as well as other plant and animal wildlife.

“We would like to see SARA take an increasingly cooperative stewardship approach toward wildlife and environmental conservation in collaboration with the hydropower industry,” stated Eduard Wojczynski, CHA Vice-Chair and project development manager at Manitoba Hydro. “The hydropower industry wishes to enter into enforceable agreements and pursue permitting approaches that benefit species overall and allow for responsible hydropower generation. Government, industry and indeed all stakeholders, have a lot we can learn from each other,” he added.

Specific, longer term SARA conservation agreements would allow for management of the species and habitat that is tailored to the particular situation in the species area. Such agreements look at the broad picture, considering the whole eco-systems with multiple species and would be monitored and enforceable regarding industry actions. The current

drafting of SARA allows for conservation agreements but as yet there are no authorization components that would make them workable.

The CHA's top two recommendations for amendments to SARA are:

1. authorizations for activities that are in compliance with conservation agreements
2. long-term or renewable incidental harm¹ permits for hydropower activities,

About CHA

Founded in 1998, the Canadian Hydropower Industry (CHA) is the national association dedicated to representing the interests of the hydropower industry. Its principal mandate is to promote hydropower nationally and internationally as a source of renewable energy, to make the economic and environmental advantages of hydropower better known, and to publicize the benefits of hydropower in the search for sustainable energy solutions. CHA members represent more than 95% of the hydropower capacity in Canada. Over 60% of Canada's electricity comes from hydropower. www.canhydropower.org.

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¹ SARA differentiates between incidental harm and direct harm to species. Incidental harm occurs during an activity not specifically intended to harm the species, such as a fish caught in the blades of a motorboat; direct harm is intentional, such as catching a fish.