



# GSX Concerned Citizens Coalition

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**For Immediate Release: January 15, 2005**

## ***Huge crowd decries Duke Point gas plant proposal***

**Nanaimo, BC**-More than a hundred people turned out to a BC Utilities Commission (BCUC) "town hall" meeting today to express their resolute objection to BC Hydro's plan to build a 252MW gas-fired electrical power plant at the Duke Point industrial park near Nanaimo.

Speaker after speaker decried the gas plant plan on a variety of grounds, including the increasingly high cost of its fuel, damage to local air quality and increased greenhouse gas emissions. Natural gas (methane) and carbon dioxide are two important human produced pollutants that are driving climate change.

"The Duke Point power plant is unnecessary and will leave a legacy of expensive and polluting energy on Vancouver Island," said Norm Abbey of the Society Promoting Environmental Conservation (SPEC). "BC Hydro is mortgaging our economic and environmental future," said Abbey.

Only two presenters spoke in favour of the proposal at the special day-long forum. Giant puppets and drummers joined the huge crowd at a noon-hour rally, sending a clear message to the BCUC, BC Hydro and politicians that residents want a different solution to Vancouver Island's long- and short-term energy challenge. A combination of conservation, industrial demand curtailment and replacement of the existing transmission cables can bridge a theoretical, short-term, worst-case supply gap that BC Hydro has used to justify the \$280 million project.

"In the long term clean, renewable energy, such as wind, solar, and micro-hydro will be the foundation of Vancouver Island's energy future," said energy and climate change expert Guy Dauncey, president of the BC Sustainable Energy Association (BCSEA). "At this critical turning point, we should embrace clean, sustainable energy."

SPEC and BCSEA are two of 12 groups that have joined the Georgia Strait Crossing Concerned Citizens Coalition's (GSXCCC) legal intervention at BCUC hearings that begin Monday in Vancouver. The BCUC will consider the Electricity Price Agreement (EPA) between BC Hydro and Pristine Power, the Calgary-based company chosen by BC Hydro to build the plant.

BC Hydro originally proposed three large gas plants and the GSX pipeline to address the alleged energy supply gap. The GSXCCC and its allies have brought evidence in several federal, provincial and municipal hearings, and similar power plants in Port Alberni, North Cowichan and Nanaimo have been rejected. The GSX pipeline project was cancelled last month when BC Hydro conceded it was unnecessary.

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