

Letter to the editor written to Logan, Davis County Clipper, Deseret New

Dear Editor:

I attended the scoping meetings for the Hook Canyon Pumping Project held by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) in Fish Haven and Montpelier last week. . City, state, county, home owner associations and individuals gave their input about the proposed project. All were adamantly opposed to this project. Hook Canyon Energy LLC. of Logan, (Symbiotics) has petitioned the federal government to construct a pumping project at Hook Canyon on the east side of Bear Lake. The location is approximately between Rainbow Cove and Cisco Beach. The proposed project is quite simple. Hook Canyon Energy purchases electricity from Rocky Mountain Power during the night time hours at a cheap rate. They use that electricity to pump Bear Lake water into a reservoir above Cisco Beach (capacity is to be 21,857 acre feet-19,510 acre feet of useable storage-surface area of 225 acres). Then during the peak electricity demand time, they let the water back into the lake through turbines and sell th e power at a higher rate. According to Hook Canyon Energy presenters at the meeting, the process is only 75% efficient. In other words it takes more electricity to put the water into the reservoir than it will produce when it is released to come back down. There is no doubt that when the water comes back down, no carbon emissions would be produced, but when the water is pumped up to the reservoir Rocky Mountain Power coal fired plants and natural gas fired plants will be used to produce the electricity to run the pumps. The electricity used to power the pumps will have carbon emissions and will leave a carbon footprint on the environment. So the process is **not environmentally** clean and it is **not self sustaining**.

One of the many concerns people attending the meeting had about the project was the volume of water that will be released back into the lake and the effect that this returning water will have on the lake. Fishery biologists believe that the returning water (15,400 acre feet with an average flow rate of 18,636 cubic feet per second) coming back into the lake through a 30 foot diameter pipe at a depth of 120 feet will stir up the materials deposited on the bottom of the lake called marl. This marl has high concentrations of calcium carbonate which gives the lake its color. The biologists believe that this stirred up calcium carbonate will eventually be circulated with wave action and lake currents in a way that fish spawning habitat will be ruined. Fish species that are found in the lake and no where else in the world are: the Bonneville Cisco, Bonneville White Fish, Bear Lake White Fish and Sculpin, and they could be lost if this project is approved. These predictions are debated by Hook Canyon Energy engineers who say that the lake bed will not be disturbed. It seems pretty incredible that 15,400 acre feet of water will come down the tail race from the upper reservoir in less than 12 hours and not impact the lake bottom. Water engineers suggest that the stirred up marl could even change the beautiful color of the lake.

There are substantial risks to this project. Even if water discharge levels are low as has been predicted, taking the water out and putting it back in Bear Lake on a daily basis represents a change in the environment of a very fragile ecosystem. **In short, no one knows exactly what effect this project will have upon Bear Lake. It will become an experiment.** In my mind Bear Lake is too fragile, too delicate, too important to be left to experimentation.

If you go to [Bearlakewatch@aol.com](mailto:Bearlakewatch@aol.com) you can read the PAD (Pre Application Document) and make up your mind about this project. Once you have read the documents, make your feelings known to [www.FERC.gov](http://www.FERC.gov). The deadline for comment to FERC is May 15, 2008. The FERC project number is P-12707. Be certain to reference the project number when you contact FERC. You can obtain regular and e-mail address information at Bearlakewatch's web site as well.

From what I observed at the scoping meetings, nearly everyone is opposed to this proposed project. I have to admit that I am troubled about the possibility that the will of the people can be circumvented by any private corporation, federal or state agencies for money. In a democracy the will of the people is supposed to govern what happens. In my mind the various agencies in the states of Utah and Idaho, all the way from the governor's office down, need to be on record as to whether they do or do not support this project. We need to know how to vote in the next election.

I am opposed to this project. It is bad for Bear Lake and the Bear Lake Valley. It is bad for Utah.

Sincerely,

Lanny Nalder

