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## Harrison Lake hydro project to get federal funds

**Gordon Hamilton**

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A large run-of-river hydro project in streams feeding into Harrison Lake has received up to \$35 million in federal funding over 10 years as part of an Ottawa program to provide incentives for renewable energy.

The Kwalsa low-impact hydro project, owned by British Columbia energy company Cloudworks Energy Ltd., is to receive a one-cent-per-kilowatt-hour incentive from Ottawa payable for up to 10 years, Natural Resources Minister Gary Lunn announced Wednesday.

Over the 10-year life of the subsidy, that could add up to a \$35-million incentive, according to Natural Resources Canada, to aid the company in delivering electricity at competitive rates. The new energy will replace diesel-fuelled energy generation that now provides electricity for first nations in the area.

When it is complete, the project is expected to supply 90 megawatts of power from eight turbines operating on four streams around the lake -- enough energy to meet the demands of 27,000 households.

A 70-kilometre transmission line is to run from the powerhouses to a new substation to be built at the northern end of Harrison Lake. It will then connect to an existing BC Hydro line. The \$100-million-plus project is to be completed by November 2010, according to the website for contractor Peter Kiewit Sons.

The environmental group Western Canada Wilderness Committee expressed skepticism Wednesday about the project's green benefits, saying it will require transmission lines that cut a wide swath through the region's forests.

"Ninety megawatts is considered a big project," said WCWC policy director Gwen Barlee, noting that as the number of new run-of-river projects increases, their impacts on wildlife also increase.

"No one is looking at the cumulative impacts of miles and miles of roads, of the blasting, of the transmission lines," she said.

"At some point, it stops being green."

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