

# Island <sup>Reprint</sup> Tides

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## Islanders fear power plant cancellation may accelerate transmission line replacement

Many British Columbians are celebrating BC Hydro's cancellation of the Duke Point Power Plant which would have used fossil fuel to generate electricity. Ian Bruce, Climate Change Specialist with the David Suzuki Foundation, commented that BC's renewable energy sector has been called a 'sleeping economic giant' and BC Hydro's decision to cancel Duke Point 'could be the alarm clock that wakes the giant.'

However, many Salt Spring and Galiano Island residents now fear that cancellation of Duke Point will increase pressure for a quick approval of new souped-up overhead transmission lines which would cross both islands. So far, more than fifteen hundred people have signed a petition asking for a submarine cable around the islands.

'We're at a pivotal point in BC's history,' says Enid Turner spokesperson for IRAHVOL (Island Residents Against High Voltage Overhead Lines). 'Now that the GSX Pipeline and the Duke Point generator have been put to rest we all need to focus on the best transmission option.'

The Vancouver Island Transmission Reinforcement Project proposes to replace an existing 13 kV 60MW overhead line with a new 230kV 1200MW transmission line on the fifty-year-old

right-of-way through Tsawwassen, Galiano, Parker, Salt Spring, and part of Vancouver Island.

Turner says that IRAHVOL understands that more capacity is needed by Vancouver Island but there are better, less expensive alternatives to the overhead lines. 'We want BC Transmission Corporation to change their whole approach to transmission lines,' she says, 'Overhead lines are ugly, outdated and, with HVDC Light technology, they're also unnecessary. 'It's time we followed the example of other countries and put them underground.'

HVDC Light lines have no electromagnetic fields nor do they have the visual impact or the noise of overhead lines because they are installed in a twelve-inch wide trench either underground or beneath the ocean floor. Overhead lines may also interfere with the migration patterns of fish and marine mammals.

IRAHVOL and TRAHVOL (Tsawwassen Residents Against High Voltage Overhead Lines) are now working together to convince BCTC that its stated preference for AC overhead lines is counterproductive. ✍

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