

BC LOCAL NEWS

## Wind power surges in B.C.

by [Tom Fletcher - BC Local News](#)

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Environmental permits have been issued for two large wind energy projects in B.C., and work is to resume in January on a half-finished project that went bankrupt last year.

As it concluded a historic land settlement with the Haida Nation, the B.C. government issued an environmental certificate last week for a 110-turbine offshore wind farm in Hecate Strait near Haida Gwaii. The \$2 billion NaiKun project includes 80-metre towers anchored to the seabed and underwater cables that connect the island chain to the BC Hydro grid at Ridley Island near Prince Rupert.

Energy Minister Blair Lekstrom and Environment Minister Barry Penner issued a second permit to the Thunder Mountain Wind Project, 45 km southeast of Tumbler Ridge in northeastern B.C. Its plan includes 160 wind turbine towers, five substations, a 65 km power line, access and maintenance roads.

Both permits impose dozens of conditions, including fish and wildlife monitoring programs and ongoing consultation with affected aboriginal communities.



Wind turbine blades await installation on towers at Dokie Ridge near Chetwynd, August 2008.  
*Tom Fletcher/Black Press*

The Haida Nation is a partner in the NaiKun project, and will operate and maintain it when it is completed.

Plutonic Power Corp. and GE Energy Financial Services announced Friday they have paid \$52.5 million to take over the Dokie Wind Project near Chetwynd. That project has been under court-supervised creditor protection and work was stopped on its phase one site in late 2008.

The resource-rich Peace River region also boasts the province's best inland wind power sites. B.C.'s first producing wind farm began operation this year on Bear Mountain near Dawson Creek, and the Dokie plan includes a second windswept ridge in the Chetwynd-Tumbler Ridge area.

B.C. is a latecomer to wind power, with numerous sites developed in Alberta and most other provinces. B.C.'s abundance of cheap hydroelectric power has historically made alternative sources uncompetitive, but with no new dams built in 25 years, the province has directed BC Hydro to buy new supplies from private developers.

The province's latest energy plan also directs BC Hydro to become energy self-sufficient by 2016, using clean domestic sources for 90 per cent of new capacity.

The NaiKun project is expected to generate enough power to supply 130,000 homes, and Thunder Mountain would supply the equivalent of another 100,000 homes.

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