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News Release
Tidal Energy Dispute Resolved

OrcaLab, a whale research station on Hanson Island, B.C., and SRM Projects Ltd., a renewable energy engineering firm from Nanaimo, B.C., jointly announced today that they have found common ground after SRM Project's tidal energy investigative license application for Blackney Passage raised concerns with OrcaLab and others because the site is located within Critical Habitat for whales. The parties agree that minimizing threats to species at risk and clean energy generation are both important for B.C.

In recognition of this, SRM Projects is withdrawing the investigative license application. OrcaLab commended SRM for this move and reiterated their support for ocean energy initiatives; provided all proposed projects go through a transparent and rigorous environmental and regulatory review process that includes First Nations and stakeholders.

Dr. Paul Spong, founder of OrcaLab states "We see this as a win-win situation." and adds "We are very pleased with how receptive SRM Projects was to the concerns we raised."

Whale researcher and marine educator, Jackie Hildering of Port McNeill who is the author of "The Marine Detective" blog, which drew public attention to the proposed project, agreed. "With SRM Projects withdrawing the Blackney Pass application, they have shown a true dedication to sustainability."

Scot Merriam, principal of SRM Projects, says "Tidal energy is a new and relatively unknown source of clean electrical power in BC. While preliminary research and demonstration studies from Europe indicate the promise of the technology, we need to introduce it here in small steps, outside of critical habitat areas, to gain local knowledge and social acceptance."

Reflecting on the initial dispute resulting from the investigative license application, Paul Spong says "One thing is clear – there is a crucial disconnect in our land acquisition process if Critical Habitat areas don't show up on the BC GIS mapping database used by proponents to search for suitable development opportunities."

SRM Projects and OrcaLab intend to maintain a dialogue going forward to share knowledge as new information becomes available about marine mammals and ocean energy. Scot Merriam concludes "Ultimately, our common goal is to look for ways we can coexist with nature and minimize our footprint."

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