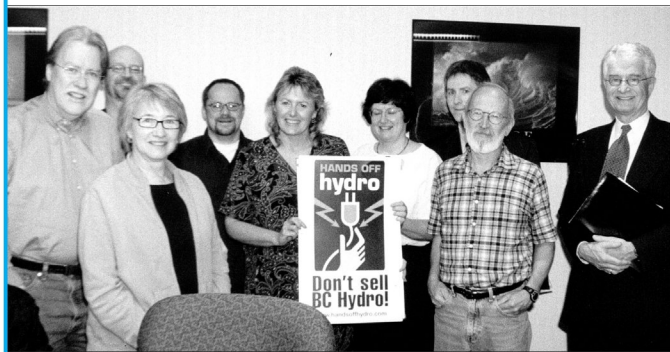


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# BC court says protection from arbitrary legislation lies in the ballot box



*BC Citizens For Public Power class action lawsuit hearings will be underway this fall. Left to right at a CFPF planning meeting are Jim Sinclair, Bill Tieleman, Marjorie Cohen, Mark Veerkamp, Jerri New, Eleanor O'Donnell, lawyer Jamie Baugh, Murray Dobbin and lawyer Leo McGrady.*

Earlier this spring the BC Supreme Court ruled against Canadian Office and Professional Employees' Union (COPE) local 378's constitutional challenge under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms of BC Hydro's deal with Accenture. The court ruled that the government has the right to introduce legislation and the Courts do not have the power to intervene.

The BC Supreme Court has also denied local 378's attempt to have the provincial government's order in council approving the contract declared invalid.

COPE had been hoping to force BC Liberals to hold a public hearing into the move that turned a third of the province's power resources to a foreign corporation, Accenture. COPE also tried to have the Supreme Court order the disclosure of Accenture documents through the BC Utilities Commission (BCUC).

In her decision, Honourable Madam Justice Neilson said, "Protection from the passage of arbitrary legislation lies in the ballot box." COPE President Jerri New commented that union members are learning the importance of

politics the hard way as BC Liberals continue to pass legislation that hurts many British Columbians.

Citizens for Public Power class action lawsuit hearings will be underway later this year. In the meantime, BC Hydro has applied for a rate increase at the BCUC. "Both Citizens for Public Power and COPE have registered as intervenors to ensure we get documents about the increase," explained New.

At Terasen Gas, new legislation (Bill 85) removes the requirement that company headquarters remain in the province and lifts the limit on foreign ownership of shares. "After unsatisfactory meetings with Terasen Gas CEO John Reid, we're quite concerned about COPE members' jobs remaining in BC."

Problems with veiled raiding of COPE members by IBEW local 213 are still not resolved at Terasen Gas. IBEW applied to the Labour Relations Board for consolidation of all bargaining units at Terasen.

"We advised IBEW that we plan to continue to have two bargaining units that have been in place since 1972."

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news from local 378

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