

Petitions presented in opposition to Endesa's electric concession, and against dams in Patagonia

Santiago, January 13, 2006 – More than 50 petitions in opposition to the provisional electric concession solicited by Endesa were presented today to the Superintendent of Electricity and Fuels (SEC), in Santiago. The administrative procedure seeks to deny the Spanish company's request, on administrative and substantive grounds.

Juan Pablo Orrego, coordinator of Ecosistemas; Enrique Alcalde, property owner in the Baker River basin, and the lawyer for Víctor Hugo Puchi, accompanied by Flavia Liberona and Fernando Dougnac presented the petitions of property owners from the Aysén region, and Chilean citizens and environmental organizations.

Ecosistemas' leader said that one of the arguments put forward in opposition was that "The preliminary studies (which Endesa requested permission to undertake) would be invasive, and could include explosions, drilling, the opening of access roads, clearing vegetation, and setting up work camps in ecosystems of high environmental and cultural value. These studies should not take place until a prior environmental and social evaluation by public agencies take place".

Álvaro Varela, lawyer for Víctor Puchi (of salmon-raising company Aquachile) denounced irregularities which the hydroelectric company has been committing, "They are working without any authorization. In my client's case, two days ago a helicopter landed on his ranch, where equipment and work crews were unloaded. This is a violation of private property rights".

He added "Endesa is operating in violation of the law. Therefore, we ask the Superintendent to suspend their work, and we call on Endesa to stop breaking the law".

Enrique Alcalde, property owner in the region of the Baker River added his name to the petition, and said that "We in the region have no information about Endesa's plans, and are still not fully aware of the extent of the projects they are proposing".

Finally, ecologist Juan Pablo Orrego said that petitions will also be filed with the regional office of the SEC in Aysén, and said that "more petitions would have been filed if the 150 affected families had been fully informed about the situation".

For more information: Mitzi Urtubia (56-2) 494 0233- 09 2256238

José M. Infante 1960, Ñuñoa-Santiago