

HYDROPOWER PROJECTS OF HIMACHAL PRADESH VIOLATING ENVIRONMENTAL NORMS WITH IMPUNITY WILL THE MEF ACT WITH REQUIRED URGENCY?

Karcham Wangtoo HEP This 1000 MW installed capacity hydropower project is under implementation on Sutlej River in Kinnaur district in Himachal Pradesh. The environment clearance to the project was given by MEF on Nov 9, 2005. Below we are giving photos from this project site showing the violations that this project is indulging in muck disposal into the river.

1. Photo showing how the muck is flowing into the Sutlej river. Photo taken a few km downstream from the dam site on Nov 10 2010



2. Photo 2 showing how the muck is flowing into the Sutlej river. Photo taken a few km downstream from the dam site on Nov 10 2010



3. Photo 3 showing how the muck is flowing into the Sutlej river. Photo taken a few km downstream from the dam site on Nov 10 2010



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4. Photo 4 showing how the muck is flowing into the Sutlej river. Photo taken a few km downstream from the dam site on Nov 10 2010



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5. Photo 5 showing how the muck is flowing into the Baspa river. Photo taken a about 1 km upstream from the confluence of Baspa river with Sutlej river on Nov 20 2010



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6. Photo 6 showing how the muck is flowing into the Baspa river. Photo taken about 1 km upstream from the confluence of Baspa river with Sujlej on Nov 20 2010



7. Photo showing how the local water source at Choling has dried up due to the construction of the Karcham Wangtoo project, Photo taken on Nov 19 2010



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8. Photo showing the broken flood protection wall along the Sutlej River downstream of Karcham Wangtoo dam is broken leading to muck flowing into the river.. Photo taken on Nov 10 2010



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9. Photo showing poor housing for workers at the Karcham Wangtoo project site. Photo taken on Nov 10 2010



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10. Photo showing how children are playing (or working? In which case it would be additional violation) close to the Sutlej river downstream from the Karcham Wangtoo Dam site. Photo taken on Nov 10 2010. Needless to add, the children of the workers are in dangerous situation here, being so close to the river known to be rapid, turbulent and changing flow patterns. The project developers should have ensured proper place for the children of the construction workers.



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Baspa II Project This 300 MW hydropower project of the same group of companies, namely JP Associates was completed in 2003 and is operating on the Baspa river, a tributary of Sutlej River.

11. Photo showing how the river bed of Baspa river is completely dry 5 km downstream of the Baspa dam. Photo taken on Nov 12 2010. This means that the Baspa project is realising no water downstream from the dam, in complete violation of the Environment norms.



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Nathpa Jakhri Project This 1500 MW installed capacity (India's largest operating hydropower project) is located on the Sutlej river just downstream of the under construction powerhouse of the Karcham Wangtoo Project. The Nathpa Jakhri project of Sutlej Jal Vidyut Nigam Limited (a joint venture of GOI and HP govt) is operating since 2005.

12. Photo showing how the Sutlej River is dry about 10 downstream from the dam site of Nathpa Jakhri Project. Photo taken on Nov 19 2010. This means that the Nathpa Jakhri dam is not releasing any water downstream from the dam in complete violation of Environmental norms.



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13 Photo showing the Nathpa Jakhri dam, it is clear that there is no minimum flow being released from the dam, contrary to the requirements of environment norms. Photo taken Nov 10 2010



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Rampur Hydropower Project This 412 MW hydropower project (funded by the World Bank) is under construction immediately downstream from the power house of the Nathpa Jakhri project. The project of SJVN was given environment clearance on March 31 2006.

14. Photo showing how the muck is flowing into the Sutlej river. Photo taken a few km downstream from the dam site on Nov 9 2010. This dumping of muck into the river is completely illegal and against the environmental norms.



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15. This is not the first time Rampur project has been indulging in this. Here is an earlier photo showing how the muck is flowing from the project into the Sutlej River. Photo taken at the adit near the Bahava panchayat in June 2009. When this was pointed out to the World Bank in early 2010, they responded that the damaged wall was reconstructed in three months!!



These are the latest photos that we have just got, showing clear evidence of the violations by the four projects. The Ministry itself does not seem to have the capacity (or the will?) to monitor and ensure compliance to its own conditions and environmental norms. We request the Ministry to take urgent steps when the evidence is presented.

This is not the first time such evidence of violation of these projects have been send to the MEF. Earlier too evidence of violations by some of these projects was sent to the ministry, but ministry failed to respond then. We hope it will respond now adequately and with necessary urgency.

It may be added here that the muck so dumped into Sutlej ultimately ends up in the downstream Bhakra Dam, considered lifeline of Northern Indian states of Punjab, Haryana and Rajasthan, reducing the water storage capacity of Bhakra. Will the Ministry ensure this does not happen?

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