

Detailed timeline of community opposition to SMEC's EIA/SIA process for the Upper Salween (Mong Ton) dam

March 10, 2015: Shan and Karen representatives protest at SMEC public meeting in Taunggyi



SMEC held a public meeting in Taunggyi, Shan State. At the meeting, about 30 Karen and Shan people protested by wearing “No Dam” headbands, holding up posters against the Salween dams, and publicly raising many questions about the planned EIA/SIA process. However, the description of this “first public EIA/SIA scoping meeting” on the official Mong Ton Hydropower Project website makes no mention of the protest.

(<http://www.mongtonhydro.com/eportal/ui?pagelId=132488&articleKey=134488&columnId=132537>)

April 6, 2015: About 150 villagers protest at SMEC public meeting in Mong Ton

About 150 local villagers protested against the Mong Ton dam during a meeting organized by SMEC in Mong Ton, southern Shan State, Burma on April 6, 2015.



The villagers, from different areas of Mong Ton, raised placards against the dam, and handed a statement to SMEC staff, raising concerns about the lack of lasting peace, and the potential flooding of many towns, villages and temples, particularly in Kunhing Township.

The consultation was mainly attended by government officials and other pro-government groups, including local militia, and villagers said that they had little opportunity to ask questions. After the consultation, the villagers went to Pittakat Hong Dhamma temple, and held a ceremony to pray for the protection of the Salween River.

The local branches of the two main Shan parties, Shan Nationalities Democratic Party (SNDP) and Shan Nationalities League for Democracy (SNLD), issued statements against the Mong Ton dam on the day of the meeting.

April 30, 2015: SMEC cancels public meeting in Kunhing due to protest by over 300 villagers

SMEC abruptly cancelled a public meeting scheduled for April 30, 2015, in Kunhing, southern Shan State, when over 300 local people, including a Shan MP, gathered to raise concerns about the planned Mong Ton megadam on the Salween river.



On April 30 from 1 pm to 3:30 pm, over 300 local people from Kar Li, Kun Hing, Keng Lom, Keng Kham, Nong Kheo, Wieng Pui, Ho Pang, Hsai Khao, Wan Lao, Kung Pao, Hsai Khao Jarn, Wo Long, Na Pao, Wan Part, Nam Lan and Na Lin Lieng gathered at Nam Pang hall, Kunhing township, planning to stage a protest against a public meeting organized by SMEC, which was to be held in the City Hall of Kunhing township.

Apparently due to news of the planned protest, the public meeting was abruptly cancelled. The protestors therefore held their own public gathering, including Nang Wah Nu, a Shan Nationalities Democratic Party MP for Kunhing, and released a statement demanding that the dam be halted. They raised concerns about damaging impacts of the dam on thousands of people and historical sites, the lack of guarantee of political rights, and the fragility of current ceasefires.

After cancelling the Kunhing public meeting, SMEC has stopped all its planned township public consultations, and is only conducting closed-door meetings with township officials.

May 20, 2015: SMEC cancels EIA/SIA field trip to Kunhing when over 300 locals plan protest

Residents of Kunhing heard that a SMEC team was planning to arrive in Kunhing on May 21, 2015, to carry out the EIA/SIA for the Mong Ton dam. They therefore submitted a letter to the township authorities and police in Kunhing in the morning of May 20, 2015, informing them that over 300 people were going to march in protest from the Nam Pang Hall to the Kunhing Bridge, at 11 am on May 21, 2015, carrying banners saying “No dam on Salween, no EIA, SIA.” However, the township administrator U Kyaw Htin told the villagers that there was no need to protest as SMEC were no longer coming. It is assumed that SMEC cancelled their plans because they learned of the planned protest.

22 May, 2015: SMEC cuts short EIA/SIA field surveys in Mong Ton in response to demands from local community leaders

During mid-May, 2015, a large SMEC team of about 45 field surveyors began conducting EIA/SIA surveys in the area of Mong Ton. From May 14-19, 2015, a group of about 25 Burmese surveyors went with a local Lahu militia to three Lahu villages (Nong Lae, Loi Kha and Loi Yo) in the Loi Kham Long tract, north of Mong Ton, to conduct surveys.

On May 20, 2015, a team of 8 surveyors came to carry out surveys in the Shan villages of Mae Ken, Mawk Zi Lee and Mawk Pao Hom, south of Mong Ton, along the route of the planned power transmission lines to Thailand. They met with villagers and gave them some cakes and bags, and asked them to sign documents. According to a local villager: “Because the company told villagers must sign, they signed. The company did not explain properly the project to villagers, so they did not understand about the project.” Other villagers said that the SMEC team only wanted to explain the positive impacts of the project, promising them electricity, and did not want to answer questions.

On May 21, 2015, the SMEC field team went to meet with villagers from Nam Hoo Khun, Hwe Aw and Mong Hang, south of Mong Ton, but many villagers in the area were already upset with what had happened the previous day. About ten local community leaders came to see the SMEC team in Mong Ton

at 8.30 in the evening, and complained about the way the surveys were being conducted, and told them to leave the area. The SMEC team argued that they had permission from authorities to carry out the survey, but finally agreed to leave if the villagers did not want them to continue.

On May 22, 2015, the entire SMEC survey team of about 45 people left Mong Ton, without completing their field surveys.

June 4, 2015: Local SNDP MP issues statement against Mong Ton dam at SMEC meeting in Mong Nai

On June 4, SMEC held a closed-door meeting with local authorities in Mong Nai. Local people and farmers issued a letter to SMEC opposing the dam. Local SNDP MP Sai Maung Gyi also issued a statement against the dam, and posted it at government buildings in the town.