



HAIDA NATION

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ACCUMULATING IMPACTS: HAIDA HAVE GOOD REASON TO OPPOSE LNG & ENB MEGAPROJECTS

“The money being thrown around by LNG companies and the Provincial government to garner support from Indigenous Nations is nothing but hush money,” said kil tlaats ‘gaa Peter Lantin, President of the Haida Nation. “I don’t believe the deals being made by ‘leadership’ are supported by the majority, and that disconnect will ensure that no LNG pipelines and plants are built. People will not stand by and watch their family’s future be sold out.”

Through the Haida Nation’s law-making body, the House of Assembly, the Council of the Nation has been directed by citizens to address the issues of the production and transport of LNG, and oil, in the north and its shipment through Haida territory. The citizens’ directives uphold the Nation’s responsibility to steward the land, sea, and air so that future generations are able to enjoy what we have today.

“We are not alone in our position on LNG or oil, and the responsibility we have to future generations,” said kil tlaats ‘gaa. “There are many good reasons to oppose these projects and few to support them. The perceived benefits in no way trump what we know we will lose. Our Nation has done its due diligence; we have spoken to BC and Canada, we have looked at the environmental, social and legal impacts of these projects and are not convinced that shipping LNG or oil from the west coast is a good idea. These projects will further pollute the Earth and no good will come of them.”

The Haida Nation’s stand on the proposed Northern Gateway project is well documented on the public record and in the courts. Recently the Nation submitted a 5-page letter to the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency detailing its analysis of the Pacific NorthWest LNG draft Environmental Assessment Report.

The EAA report looks at the possible impacts of the construction, operation and decommissioning of a liquefaction, storage and export facility. The Petronas facility is proposed to be built 15 km south of Prince Rupert on Lelu Island, located in the Skeena River estuary, which is also critical salmon habitat.

During the federal government environmental assessment, the Haida Nation was not consulted, even though the project will impact the land and waters surrounding Haida Gwaii. A 2004 Supreme Court of Canada ruling said consultation and accommodation must be responsive and meaningful when dealing with the Haida Nation and it must also be proportionate to the strength of its title and rights. The court also emphasized the importance of reconciling Haida, federal, and provincial differences. The Haida Nation’s title case is recognized as one of the strongest in the country.

In addition, the cumulative effects of the proposed project have not been assessed in relation to Haida Gwaii and with the estimated increase in shipping alone (350+ ships more a year) there will be a large impact, especially on species that are at risk.

Over the years the Haida Nation has signed a number of agreements with the federal and provincial governments including one that jointly manages Gwaii Haanas National Park Reserve and Haida Heritage Site. The agreements commit all governments to protect Haida Gwaii's rare and sensitive terrestrial and oceanic systems, and to manage Haida Gwaii at a higher standard and with a lower threshold of risk.

"The possibility of having a ship wreck along the coast and discharging 1250 cubic metres of heavy fuel into the waters of Gwaii Haanas is not something we want to see. Addressing current issues with shipping and the projected increase is a top priority for us," said kil tlaats 'gaa. "The Simushir incident in late 2014 was as close as we want to get to having to deal with a spill, and at the time, the federal government's ability to respond was very limited."

The Nation's submission to the CEAA spelled out other basic inadequacies with the EAA report:

- Human Health – the project's impact to human health and socio-economic values from an event such as an oil spill;
- Climate Change – the project will contribute an estimated 8.5% increase to BC's greenhouse gas emissions;
- Birds and other species – the impact of the project on habitat and species important to the Haida Nation and the impact of the project on internationally recognized marine bird populations, marine mammals and endangered species;
- Introduced Species – the exchange of tanker ballast water and the introduction of alien species to waters surrounding Haida Gwaii.

"The federal and provincial government needs to reject this report and project," said kil tlaats 'gaa. "The report was written under a Conservative government. I trust the values and principles by which today's Liberal government wishes to operate are closer to those of the Nations that rely on the natural world for their sustenance and livelihood. The Liberal government not only needs to reconcile with Indigenous nations in heart, but also in how indigenous knowledge and science are considered when assessing projects of this type."

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