

REGIONAL STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT FOR NORTHERN BRITISH COLUMBIA: THE CASE AND THE OPPORTUNITY

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INTRODUCTION



Meaningful involvement in environmental decision-making that impacts us and the values we care about is a fundamental question of environmental justice, human dignity and self-determination. Deeply-felt debates over the future use of lands and resources have a long history in British Columbia. Economic development decisions frequently determine which ways of life remain possible for people to enjoy and pass on to their children, and which ways of life are foreclosed, sometimes permanently.

Photo: Unsplash

In some areas the changes brought by these developments have been permanent and irreversible for the people who live there and the environment and renewable resources that they have depended upon—as First Nations, farmers and ranchers, loggers, fishers, outfitters, and tourism operators. In the Peace River Valley, for example, lingering anger still surrounds the creation of W.A.C. Bennett Dam. Over time, many decisions about individual developments, such as approvals for clearcut logging and mineral exploration have come to profoundly shape the character and way of life of the province’s different regions.

History has shown that failing to listen to the voices of First Nations and non-Indigenous residents who seek meaningful involvement in environmental decision-making that impacts their communities is a recipe for conflict and uncertainty, landing resource projects in the courts or leaving them stymied by protests. In the last four decades, British Columbia has witnessed a number of challenges from First Nations and the public in response to resource development proposals. Many of these debates have focused on single large-scale proposed developments: The Kemano II Completion Project in the Northwest, the Windy Craggy Mine on the BC-Alaska border, the Tulsequah Chief and New Prosperity mines, Site C hydro-electric dam and the Enbridge Northern Gateway pipelines and tankers proposal are a small subset of a long list of environmental decisions that had or have the potential to profoundly affected the future of the regions and territories where they are proposed.

But even as a few high profile projects have been halted or delayed through the tireless efforts of local residents and allies, some 250,000 individual permits and approvals for a host of different forms of development have been granted by the provincial government with no “big picture” analysis of their cumulative effects on things we value.¹ Communities today are facing not only the residual impacts that have accumulated from past and present developments like logging, mining and hydro-electric development, but those that can be reasonably anticipated in the future as a result of a potentially large number of new resource development projects.

PEACE RIVER



Photo: Terra Firma

More than a dozen liquefied natural gas (“LNG”) projects in the Northwest and associated gas extraction, pipelines and infrastructure in the Northeast, along with a raft of mining and hydro-electric proposals, have become a lightning rod for a broader debate about the ways of life, future development options and choices that will prevail in each region. A climate of uncertainty has taken a toll on individuals, families, communities, local and regional governments, First Nations governments and the very industries and companies that are proposing these and other developments. First Nations, local governments, citizens groups and communities in northern British Columbia are grappling with how these proposed new developments, collectively, will affect the values they care about and opportunities moving forward.

This report concerns the future of northern British Columbia and the place of northerners in defining that future—a future in which LNG development will likely be a major driver of outcomes, some temporary and many permanent—over the near and long-term.

Against this backdrop, West Coast Environmental Law (West Coast) and the Northwest Institute (NWI) launched our “Northern Dialogue on LNG.” The simple purpose was to take the pulse—to provide an immediate and direct opportunity for interested individuals, organizations, and governments, including First Nations governments, residing in the Northwest and Northeast to discuss their views on the future of their regions as they could be affected by LNG and other developments.

Assessment and management of the cumulative effects of past, present-day and future developments and the capacity of governments to manage the pace and scale of proposed developments were central to these discussions. At their very heart was widespread concern about the very place and voice of northerners in determining the future of their regions—their ability and capacity to influence development decisions and control developments that would affect that future.

British Columbia's Auditor General², the BC Hydro Site C Joint Review Panel³, and the BC Forest Practices Board⁴, among others, have brought weight and attention to the need to better manage the cumulative effects of multiple forms of development on biodiversity, ecological integrity, sustainable livelihoods and community infrastructure and services. Recent and pending court judgments involving litigation by First Nations inside and outside of the province have focused on the actual and potential infringements wrought by cumulative effects to Aboriginal and treaty rights, including Aboriginal title, associated with cumulative impacts.⁵

For its part, the Province has made strides to address these and related concerns through its Cumulative Effects Framework⁶ and associated pilot projects, the Environmental Stewardship Initiative⁷, various intergovernmental agreements with First Nations, and improved inter-ministry working groups reviewing and permitting development projects⁸.

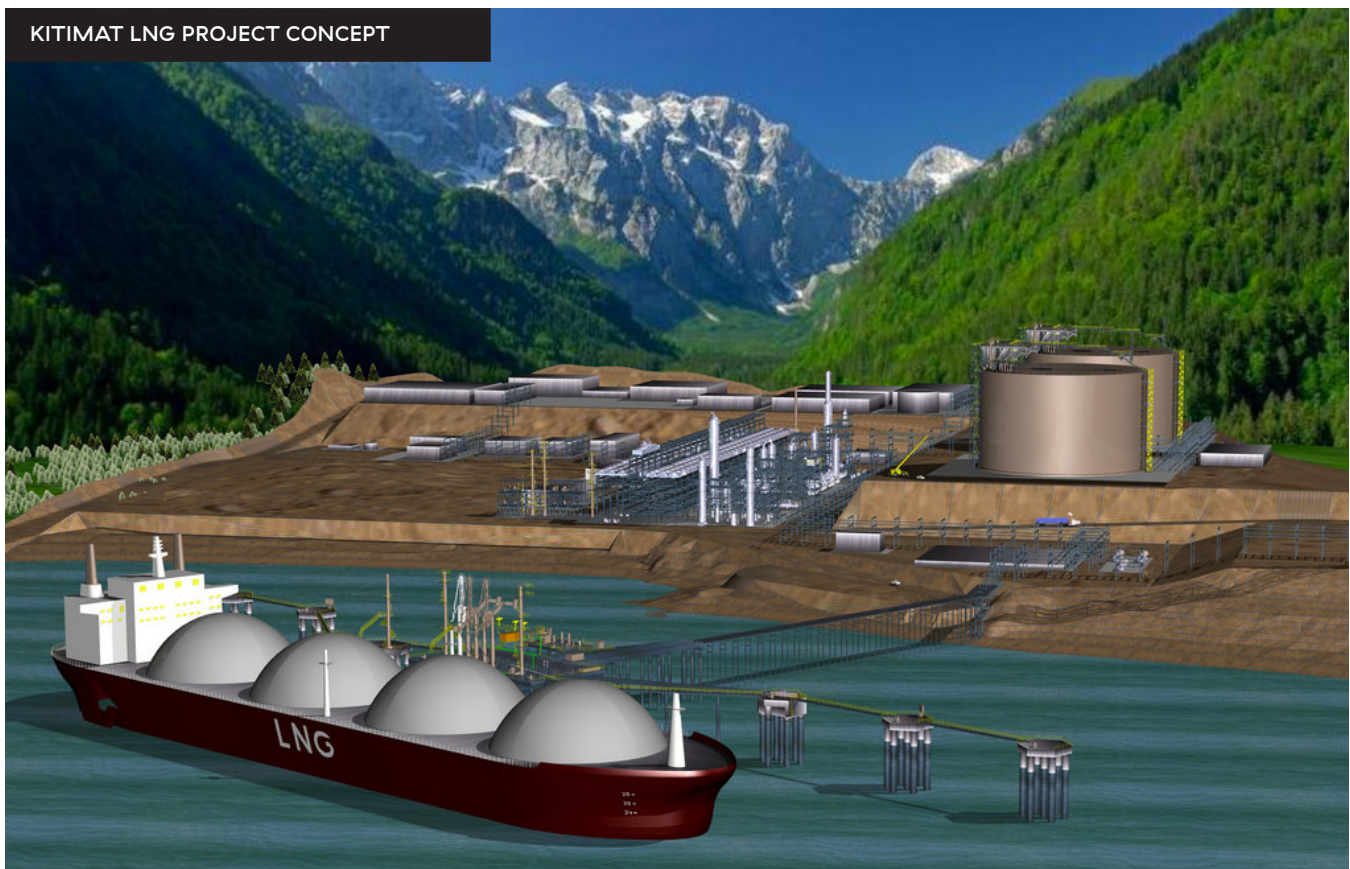


Photo: The Canadian Press / beaconenergynews.ca

This report argues that, while welcome, these initiatives alone are not enough to address serious deficiencies and needs in a number of areas:

Government-to-government relationship with First Nations – The need to engage in a government-to-government relationship with First Nations for the purposes of environmental decision-making on their territories: Indigenous legal orders pre-exist Canadian law and continue to have ongoing relevance and authority today. Canadian constitutional recognition of existing Aboriginal title and rights, including governance rights, creates a legal imperative to fully involve First Nations in environmental governance.

POLES AT GITWANGAK, GITXSAN TERRITORY



Photo: Hannah Askew

Credible context-sensitive values – The need to proactively engage local residents in identifying and validating a full range of current and relevant regional social, economic and ecological values potentially affected by proposed LNG development and in evaluating development scenarios that best safeguard these values: Current approaches have not established a process of public engagement for confirming multiple social, economic, cultural and ecological values. Meaningful engagement will also require information about the condition of needs associated with values based on best available scientific and local and Indigenous knowledge.

Sustainability-based framework – The need for a framework that integrates a range of socio-economic and ecological values rather than treating them in isolation from one another, and to avoid glossing over and reducing a range of values to a simple “development versus the environment” paradigm: Current approaches fail to recognize how the interaction of values and related socio-ecological conditions can be positively and negatively mutually reinforcing.

Futures-oriented – The need to focus on desired outcomes and legacies and not simply the most likely ones that are the residual effects of impact mitigation measures. And the need to anticipate different scenarios for LNG development and other future developments across the North combined with the need to assess what is required for the Province, regional and local governments, First Nations and communities to most effectively manage the benefits and adverse impacts associated with these scenarios and their capacity and preparedness to do so. Current approaches in cumulative effects assessment, management and monitoring have focused more on past and current developments with less attention to future scenarios, except in restrictive ways.

Alternatives-oriented – The need to accept that outcomes are not a “given” and that the identification of a range of development scenarios and the option to choose from them is central to comparing their potential for cumulative impacts and informing and defining preferred development strategies and environmental management approaches.

Management triggers and benchmarks – The need to identify and establish management thresholds or benchmarks that trigger management actions for all valued conditions, not simply those that are defined by regulation. Benchmarking graduated levels of acceptable and unacceptable risk provides guidance, for example, for management responses to changes in water quality and the rate and level of local population increases: Current approaches are largely and narrowly focused on regulation-based thresholds and exclude a broad range of other valued social, economic and cultural conditions. These management triggers and benchmarks need to be based on best available scientific, local and Indigenous knowledge.

Public engagement – Within the context of government-to-government engagement with First Nations, the need to actively collaborate with local residents and other individuals with an interest in the region in shaping approaches to regional cumulative effects management.

Collaboration with non-governmental organizations – Within the context of government-to-government engagement with First Nations, the need to actively collaborate with environmental non-governmental organizations (ENGOS) and other civil society groups in shaping approaches to regional cumulative effects management: To date there has been little hands-on involvement of ENGOS in provincial cumulative effects pilots, nor in shaping provincial positions advanced in environmental stewardship initiative discussions. At a minimum, where industry actors are engaged, a balanced opportunity should be provided to ENGOS and other civil society groups on this issue.

Regional strategic-level environmental assessment – The need for a regional strategic-level environmental assessment: There have been proposals and appeals from a number of ENGOS⁹ and First Nations for the Province to initiate a regional strategic environmental assessment (RSEA) of proposed LNG developments to address the potential cumulative effects that will be the direct and indirect result of LNG developments in northwest BC. The Province has yet to advance discussion of an RSEA-based approach.

WE NEED SUSTAINABLE THINKING ABOUT THE ENVIRONMENT



Photos: BC Government

The Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment of which the Province is a member has made the case for RSEAs as a means for reducing the uncertainty, inefficiency and duplication associated with project-by-project environmental assessment and the serious failings of cumulative effects assessment and management at the project level.¹⁰ In British Columbia, the current piece-meal approach to the assessment of LNG projects has undermined public confidence and trust in the ability and capacity of provincial institutions to manage the pace and scale of development in a way that assures a positive legacy consistent with local values and regional sustainability and growth objectives for people across the North.

The proposal for RSEA in this report could provide an important means for addressing the deficiencies in the Province's Cumulative Effects Assessment Framework in all of the aforementioned areas, particularly in regards to public engagement. It would provide a means for streamlining the project review process and establishing the context and direction for regional development strategies and environmental management frameworks mindful of the legacies that they will leave to future generations of British Columbians.

The possible futures facing British Columbians in the Northwest and Northeast were addressed by residents of these regions in the Northern Dialogue on LNG, as well as in public comments submitted on specific projects as part of the formal Environmental Assessment process. What they had to say about their hopes and fears for their ways of life and the environment that supports them is described in the first part of this report.

The second part of the report provides recommendations and reasons for how to better secure a sustainable future for British Columbia and the people of the Northwest and Northeast in the face of the potential cumulative effects resulting from LNG proposals and other developments that most concern them.

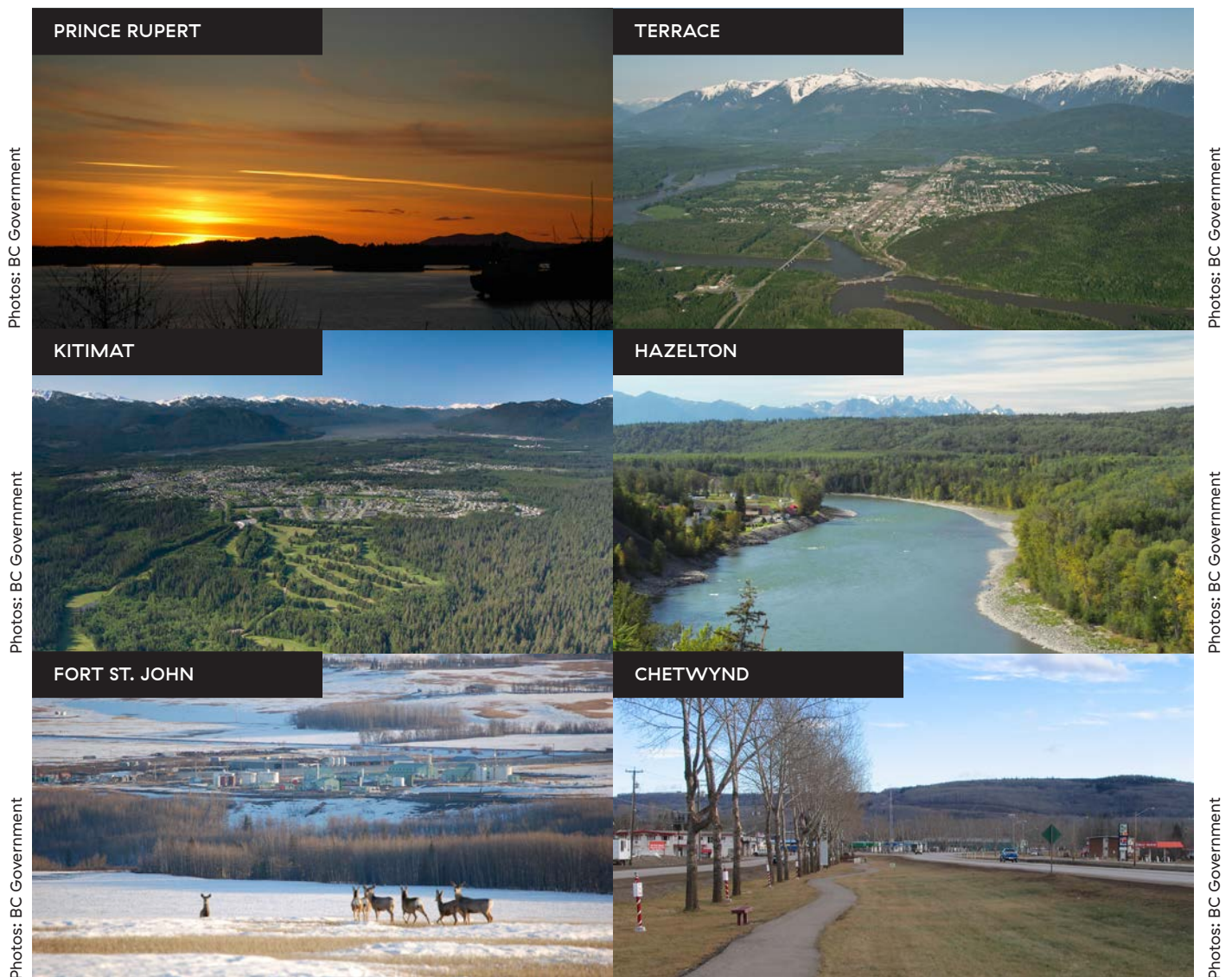
Notwithstanding the Province's efforts in this and other areas, at its foundation this report is about the efforts that are required to secure a "social licence" from northern British Columbians that will provide a measure of certainty and confidence that the paths of development that the Province is pursuing in the Northwest and Northeast are ones that people who live and work there can accept and endorse.

A scenic landscape photograph of a river winding through a valley. The sun is bright in the upper right corner, creating a starburst lens flare effect. The sky is a deep blue with wispy white clouds. The river flows through a lush green valley with rolling hills in the background. The foreground shows a grassy bank with some trees.

PART 1: THE DIALOGUE SESSIONS

THE CONTEXT

The Northern Dialogue on LNG attracted over 200 people in six communities in British Columbia's Northeast and Northwest from Prince Rupert to Fort St. John. Participants from diverse organizations and walks of life actively and enthusiastically engaged in discussions about the future of their regions in a climate in which proposals for liquefied natural gas plants and supporting pipelines and infrastructure have dominated much of the attention to the province's development agenda. Each dialogue session was prefaced with a brief presentation on regional strategic environmental assessment. Participants were asked to think about the future of the region not from the point of view of the pros and cons of specific projects, but rather from the point of view of the social and ecological values most important to them to protect and encourage moving forward.



THE DIALOGUE SESSIONS: THE APPROACH

Dialogue Sessions and follow-up webinars were held with participants in six communities between December 2014 and April 2016: Prince Rupert, Terrace, Kitimat and Hazelton in the Northwest; and Fort St. John and Chetwynd in the Northeast. Invitations and notices about the sessions were sent to a wide range of regional organizations and individuals. Interest was high and a broad range of men and women participated with diverse affiliations and backgrounds, including First Nations¹¹ and First Nation organizations, chambers of commerce, municipal leaders and staff, academics, teachers, students, social workers, ecologists, health care professionals and other public sector workers, and non-government organizations.

Generally the sessions were several hours in duration and were organized as both an open forum and smaller discussion groups. The discussions were facilitated by West Coast and NWI staff.

The discussions occurred in a semi-structured format and organized around six broad questions with additional prompts to facilitate the conversation and allowances for participants to direct the discussion to related matters of concern to them.¹² The intent of the questions was to focus the discussion on values, explaining the following:

- (a) What values (associated with the biophysical and human environment) mattered most to participants in the region and whether there were accepted management objectives for them
- (b) A plausible best case future scenario in the next 10 years for the region and the state of the identified values
- (c) A plausible worst case future scenario in the next 10 years for the region and the state of the identified values
- (d) The tipping point between these two scenarios where the sustainability of the identified values was at risk; or, alternatively, under current conditions and business-as-usual, to identify what values were most resilient or vulnerable
- (e) The consequences of failure to manage cumulative effects on the identified values
- (f) The steps that should be taken or are being taken to protect the identified values.

The discussion was summarized without attribution and reviewed by all of the participants at the close of each session.¹³

THE DIALOGUE SESSIONS: WHAT WE HEARD

While there were some significant differences in the messages we heard from the Northeast and the Northwest, three underlying themes came through strongly in both regions: firstly, a feeling of alienation from meaningful input into environmental decision-making processes; secondly, a lack of trust in government at all levels to responsibly manage the cumulative impacts of development; and thirdly, a sense that northern communities are disproportionately bearing the burden and stress of resource development for the benefit of the province.

The Northwest Sessions

The overriding message in the Northwest Dialogue Sessions was one of pent-up frustration, anxiety and stress associated with a lack of control and influence over anticipated LNG developments in the region and the potential impacts that they were perceived to induce. Participants felt powerless in the face of an immediate future that appeared to them as uncertain and overwhelming with the broad range of major development proposals announced or underway—more than a dozen pipelines and LNG processing facilities, 17 mines entering production, dozens of advanced mineral exploration projects, and 5 hydroelectric transmission lines.

Participants indicated that there were few meaningful opportunities for people in the region to talk about their concerns with one another in a structured and organized way. This was creating social conflict and tension within communities—communities that pride themselves on their shared values and strong cohesion. Participants in the Northwest were keenly aware of how LNG-induced development and associated pipelines and exploration activity tied them to the Northeast and the people who live and work there. In spite of regional differences, they recognized that there were many environmental and social values that they held in common.

The number and scale of the projects that were being announced, and the rapid pace at which the Province reviewed and approved them, overwhelmed the capacity and ability of local governments, First Nations governments, businesses, NGOs and residents to participate effectively in environmental assessments. Fears were expressed about a “boom and bust” development scenario that would sacrifice long-term, stable investments for short-term gain, and that would cripple social and municipal infrastructure and distort the current socio-economic base of the region.

Without question, the overriding values identified above all else expressed in the Northwest sessions were salmon and food security. Salmon are viewed as the social, economic and cultural lifeblood of the region; they tie people together and are central to collective identity. Air quality, notably in the Kitimat airshed, was repeatedly identified as an important environment value as well.

Attached to the high value placed on salmon and food security, participants identified socio-economic equality and the avoidance of economic “winners and losers”, community cohesion and interdependence and cultural diversity as key values. These were based to a great extent on the sharing of the region’s natural resources and were not cash-based.

Economic security and stability was expressed as a core value and associated with the values of local control over natural resource development and economic diversity. Local employment in sustainable jobs was highly valued and associated with training and job creation that would support this value.

Linked to these values, and in response to the current perceived threats to them, participants identified mental health as important as well as accessible health and social services and safe and affordable housing.

Understanding the conditions of these values is important. Participants identified timely access to sound, high quality information indicative of the condition of these values as an important value in its own right, as well as high quality information about those developments that potentially threaten those values.

COMMUNITIES ARE CONCERNED ABOUT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

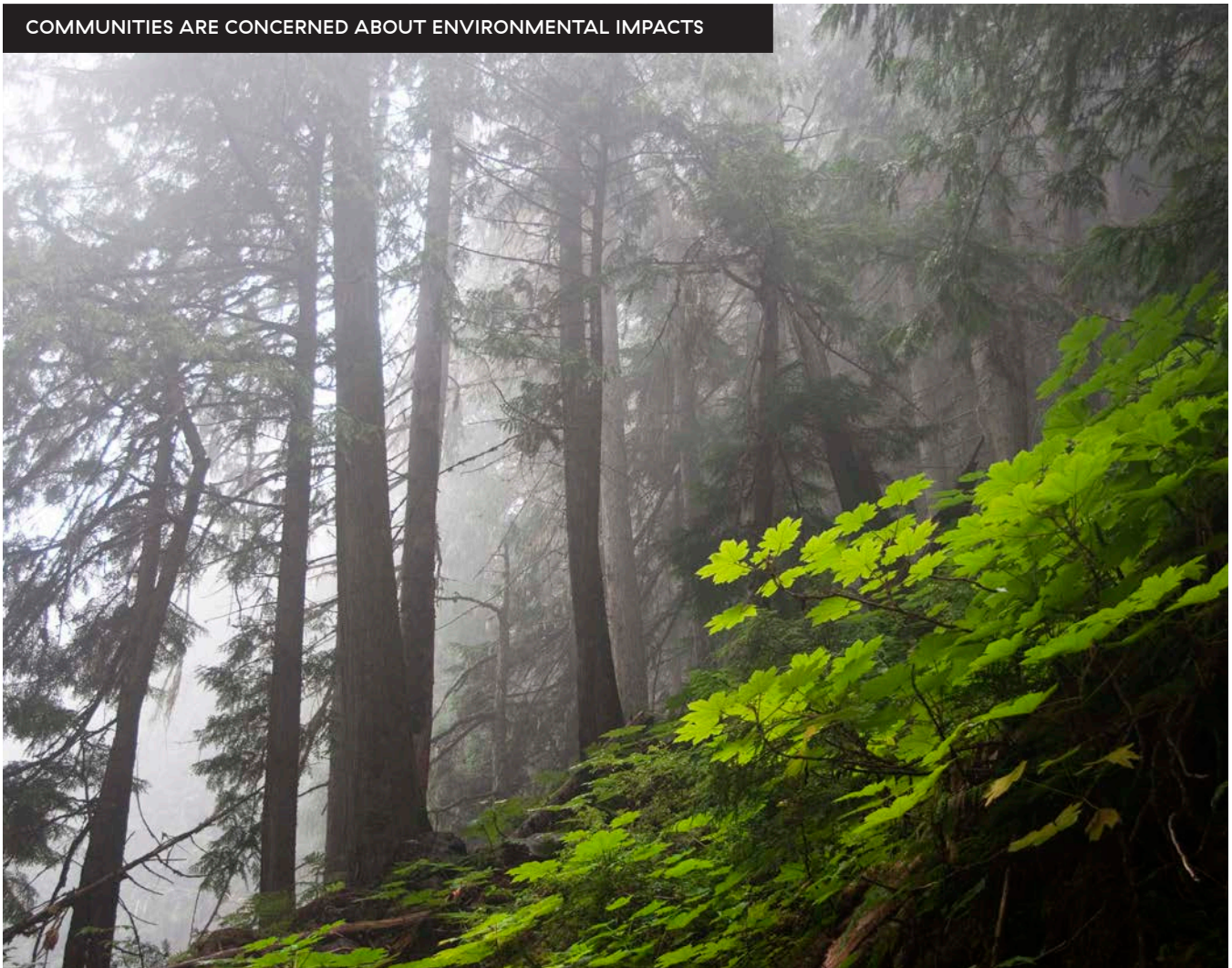


Photo: Unsplash

Participants described a best case scenario for sustaining these values as one characterized by:

- staged or phased development with an acceptable pace and scale that would allow sufficient time to build capacity and preparedness at the prospect of “boom” conditions
- determining the pace and scale of acceptable development on the basis of high quality, unbiased information that is publicly available, including a social infrastructure assessment
- a diversified economic base to reduce vulnerability associated with an over-dependency on a single economic sector
- values associated with health and wellness, education and economic security as key drivers of development
- conditions that foster improved employment and employment income
- a development threshold limiting the region to a single LNG terminal
- project commitments by companies that are upheld
- comprehensive community-based regional planning that provides guidance that is accepted and applied in support of key regional values

Participants described a worst case scenario that would undermine these values and pose a level of unacceptable risk as one characterized by:

- three or more LNG plants in Prince Rupert and the Skeena Estuary
- the ecological collapse of regional fish stocks and economic collapse of regional fisheries
- an influx of temporary workers from outside the region that would increase homelessness, poverty and the cost of living, fracture community cohesion and trigger social conflicts, overwhelm First Nation cultures, and induce an out-migration of long-term residents from the region

The tipping point for the introduction of permanent, irreversible impacts on the sustainability of key regional values was described as simply more than one LNG terminal in Prince Rupert and one in Kitimat.

Participants recognized that a number of plans and planning processes at varying local and sub-regional scales existed¹⁴ in the region and that could provide good guidance and contribute to a planning framework for managing LNG-driven development and cumulative effects. However, concern was also expressed that these plans were disparate, not integrated, and, based on current conditions, not determining factors in how LNG-based development decisions are made.

The Northeast Sessions

The key message from the Northeast Dialogue Sessions was clear: the current approach to determining and managing resource development projects in the region is long past what is acceptable. A region that has long been promoted as an economic hydrocarbon-based “bread basket” along with a narrow focus on extractive industries is now experiencing conditions where the sustainability of other resources and the livelihoods and ways of life of those who depend upon them are imperiled.

The Northeast’s freshwater resources are an overriding value in the region, and one that is most at risk in the face of the water and energy requirements of LNG-based processing facilities and ancillary exploration activities, including hydraulic fracturing (“fracking”). Participants indicated that local and regional control of water resources is key to managing LNG-driven exploration and development in the region. The supply and quality of water resources in the upper Peace River watershed is central to the future sustainability of this value.¹⁵

Like participants in the Northwest, participants in the Northeast discussions placed high values on environmental quality, local access to and use of the regional environment, and their attachment to wilderness landscapes. Social values of community cohesion and solidarity were held high. Indeed many core values identified by participants in the Northeast were the same as those identified in the Northwest. The difference was a heightened state of concern in the Northeast about the current state of conditions related to environmental values and the vulnerability and resilience of those conditions to withstand ongoing cumulative impacts from past and present developments let alone those associated with the socio-economic and environmental impacts of LNG-driven development.



Participants tended to express their core values as a function of what they felt was most threatened by the current state of “grab and go” development and the prospect of ramped-up developments that would far outstrip the capacity of all levels of government to manage it effectively.

Treaty 8 First Nation participants gave accounts of levels of hydrocarbon exploration activity that amounted to a free-for-all on their traditional lands. They indicated that in response to a continuous erosion of their treaty and Aboriginal rights and associated traditional use of their territory they were compelled to initiate litigation to prevent these ongoing infringements.

Landowners and other residents spoke of the ongoing anxiety and fear associated with a future that was uncertain and that they felt powerless to influence—the options, desired choices and outcomes having been pre-determined by the Province and resource companies. Some instances were cited of long-time residents who had left the region because they were chronically demoralized by the declining state of the environment and an ongoing condition of disempowerment where they felt no means were available to effectively address it.

In identifying the ecological and socio-economic conditions that were most vulnerable and least resilient, participants indicated the conditions and their associated values that need immediate management attention in relation to ongoing and future cumulative effects in the region. This included the sustainability of:

- Woodland caribou and moose population abundance, distribution and supporting habitat
- Key fish stocks (grayling and bull trout) abundance, distribution and supporting habitat
- Fresh water quality and quantity throughout the region
- Watershed functioning of the lower Peace River
- Food supply and food security on arable lands in the region
- Integrity of the land base for traditional, recreational, agricultural and tourism uses
- Long-term local and community employment
- Public confidence and trust in the Province’s management of ecosystems and biodiversity
- Fair and equitable distribution of economic benefits between the region and the greater Province

Participants identified a best case development scenario as one characterized by:

- Established protections of critical watersheds and wetlands
- Proactive management of future development and associated cumulative effects
- Cooperation and collaboration between communities and industry
- Economic sector diversification beyond extractive industries
- Sectoral and multi-development efficiencies in land and water use
- Social planning and a proactive approach to the management of adverse social impacts
- A health care system supportive of community needs
- Fair distribution of economic benefits to northerners and First Nations and their communities
- Local and First Nation governments assuming control for the issuance of water licenses

The Northeast Sessions focused less on describing a worst case, and more on the requirements for addressing the ongoing cumulative effects in a region where tipping points and risk thresholds for key environmental values were of central concern. Industry was viewed as having no incentive to address cumulative effects and the Province was viewed as having no record of effectively managing cumulative effects—an approach that was essentially reactive in a “big picture” assessment and landscape planning vacuum.

In the 1990s subregional land use plans, such as the Fort Nelson and Fort St. John land and resource management plans, provided objectives and guidance for land and resource use decisions in the Northeast. Participants indicated that, other than in the Muskwa–Kechika management area, regional plans were never fully implemented and failed to incorporate First Nations rights, interests and values.

Dialogue participants expressed concern over the sweeping influence held by the BC Oil and Gas Commission in shaping land use decisions and in undermining the standing of other land-based interests and other regional and local land and resource plans.¹⁶

Dialogue participants indicated the need for a comprehensive refresh of the management objectives and values established in many existing plans. They expressed the need for local and regional-level plans that were publicly reviewed and supported to have standing as a determining factor in land and resource management decisions in the region. Dialogue participants also indicated that regional-level planning processes were needed to fully engage all of the people of the Northeast as well as technical resources that included the best available science-based knowledge and traditional and local knowledge.

The participants identified a set of practical and immediate steps that were required to address the threats to the core values they identified:

- Measures to ensure effective protection of Treaty 8 rights and Aboriginal rights from infringements by cumulative effects
- Full consultation and engagement of citizens and creation of the appropriate forum for collaboration between regional interests to develop a share vision of the desired future for the region and the conditions that would apply to any future LNG-induced development
- Watershed management plans that would include identification and protection of aquifers needing protection and a moratorium on the use of freshwater for fracking until planning was completed and the necessary protections were in place
- A regional plan that would connect wildlife habitat south of the Peace River to those north of the Peace and mitigate ongoing fragmentation of core habitat, summer and winter range and migration corridors
- A plan that would focus on the integration and consolidation of pipeline right-of-ways to reduce the cumulative footprint of industry
- A regional plan that would address the protective area requirements to address the current deficit in regional terms¹⁷ and when compared to the provincial average
- Measurable landscape objectives and thresholds (as with the Muskwa-Kechika special management area) for the assessment, monitoring and management of cumulative effects
- An expanded mandate for the Forest Practices Board or other tribunal with a robust mandate that would provide for broad oversight of land use and environmental practices in the region

The perceived and actual state of the environment is the subject of debate and concern in the Northeast. Participants indicated the need for credible baseline information to establish the current state of conditions relative to past and future trends attached to key socio-economic and environmental values identified and validated by the people of the Northeast. Such a baseline would be the basis for a broad scale assessment of future development options for the region.

Review of First Nations and Public Comments on Current Project Proposals

While our Dialogue Sessions asked participants to focus on the “big picture” of their values, many had participated previously in project-specific reviews of LNG facilities and pipelines conducted by the Province’s Environmental Assessment Office and/or the Canadian Environmental Assessment Office. Some had appeared before the Joint Review Panel on BC Hydro’s Site C Energy Project. The concerns and views that these individuals and organizations expressed through various project review processes were part of the underlying story that informed the Dialogue Sessions and provide a complement to the bigger picture narratives that emerged there. Below is a brief review of public and First Nations comments on particular project proposals currently facing the region. These represent only a few of the many projects that are proposed in the region.

Public and First Nations Concerns—Prince Rupert Gas Transmission Project, Pacific Gas Looping Project and Pacific Trail Pipelines Project

The proposed Prince Rupert Gas Transmission Project, the Pacific Gas Looping Project and the Pacific Trail Pipelines Project are associated with various LNG proposals in the Northwest. Our review of comments by First Nations, the general public, local governments and NGOs submitted to the Province’s Environmental Assessment Office in late 2013 identified many major areas of concern, including:

- Repeated devaluation of marine resources that local food security, local economies, and First Nations cultures are dependent upon
- Low confidence in the accuracy of the predicted effects resulting from the project and their significance
- Serious deficiencies in the baseline data to support these predictions
- Serious gaps with respect to the valued environmental and socio-economic conditions and associated values that were assessed
- Absence of a sound and credible assessment of cumulative effects and a broader scale assessment of multiple projects both proposed and reasonably anticipated
- Absence of functional linkages and attention to “upstream” developments in the Northeast, such as increasing exploratory drilling (including hydraulic fracking) and associated impacts, particularly on fresh water, that are tied to LNG proposals in the Northwest
- Inattention to the distribution of project costs and benefits between local communities, First Nations and people in the Northwest and the rest of the Province and Canada and the socio-economic and environmental trade-offs between short-term and long-term impacts and opportunities
- A state of public abjection in which people, communities, local governments and First Nations are overwhelmed by the scale and timing of the proposed projects that could profoundly affect their futures and their ability and capacity to influence the decisions that will affect those futures.

BUD NAPOLEON ON HIS FAMILY'S TRAPLINE IN TREATY 8 TERRITORY



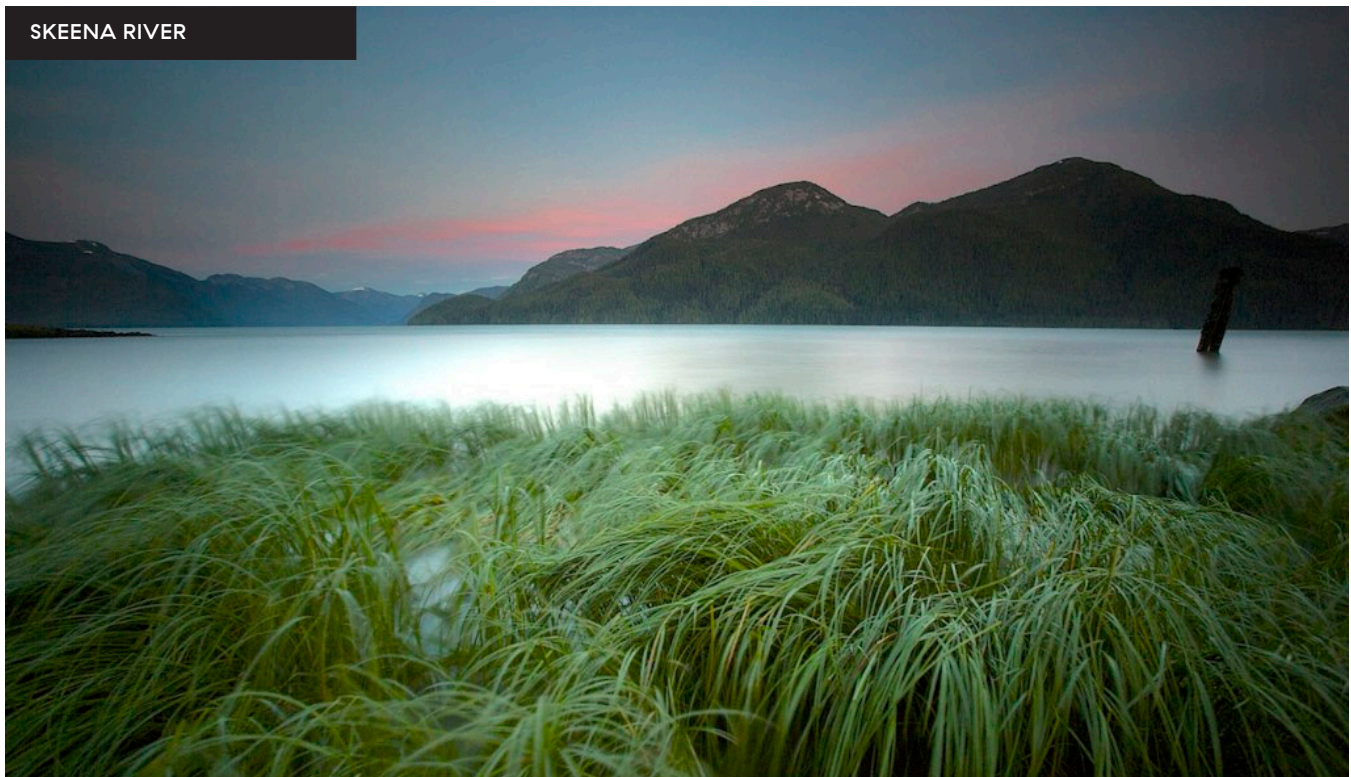
Photo: Hannah Askew

In their submissions, affected First Nations repeatedly indicated the need to substantively and transparently address project impacts and cumulative effects on treaty rights and Aboriginal rights and title. This is tied to a pressing need for improved multi-year baseline data to better determine trends in the conditions of affected environmental and socio-economic conditions and the application of Indigenous traditional knowledge and traditional land use information in the earliest stages of pre-application project design. It is also tied to an expressed deep distrust in the data that is used and the impartiality of its interpretation. The net result is a concern over the accuracy of the development scenario and the impacts that are described by the proponents and the effectiveness of the mitigation measures and resulting residual impacts accepted by the Province.

Exacerbating these concerns is a clearly expressed frustration by First Nations over the inability by any party to see them addressed. Briefing sessions and information sessions about these developments consistently fell well short of what First Nations understood to be “consultation” and “engagement” by the Province.

A central issue that emerges in the submissions by First Nations is concern about cumulative effects and the need for a broad-scale assessment of the combined impacts of past, present and anticipated future developments. At the heart of this is an interest in defining the capacity of regions to absorb impacts on valued socio-economic and environmental conditions. This involves establishing benchmarks or thresholds of acceptable tolerance and risk and monitoring and assessing actual and potential cumulative effects against them.

Public comments on these projects overlapped with many of those by First Nations, particularly with regard to the high value of the Skeena River as the second-most productive salmon-bearing river in British Columbia with a wild salmon economy estimated to be worth over \$100 million annually. And like First Nations, public comments indicated a widespread failure to assess the proposed projects against bio-physical and socio-economic conditions that were of high value to northern residents, particularly and surprisingly certain wildlife species and supporting habitat as well as those associated with community economic and social well-being, such as community infrastructure and health and social services, recreation and local livelihoods.



A widespread complaint was expressed that proposed project benefits were not assessed against the loss of potential opportunities and benefits in other sectors, such as tourism, outfitting and forestry. The review of these proposed projects by the Province's Environmental Assessment Office occurred roughly over the same period of time in the fall of 2013, and in addition to other projects announced or anticipated in media reports, public comments understandably focused equally on the bigger picture and the direction of future development in the region. Many comments paint a picture of communities and a region that feels overwhelmed and in the dark about what developments could transpire and what this meant for their future. There is a strong sense that those most affected by these developments are the least equipped and least empowered to address them in a manner that gave them a sense of control over their future.

Public comments express clearly the need for a development planning framework and coordinated regional studies and plans that can explore and address a range of development options such as the feasibility of an energy corridor as an alternative to multiple linear pipeline corridors, the conditions for a sustainable economy and whether or not an LNG-based economy can satisfy those conditions. These conditions would include the achievement of lasting benefits that can generate a positive legacy from developments in the region for future generations of British Columbians who choose to live in the Northwest.

Since the fall of 2013 BC First Nations leaders have convened summits, participated in conferences and held gatherings to share perspectives on the prospects of LNG-driven development in the Northwest and Northeast. A review of a number of these¹⁸ indicates some of the central principles and values expressed by First Nations in the assessment of LNG facilities and pipelines:

- wealth is measured by a healthy community and a healthy environment that balances the integrity of the land with economic development
- the sustainability of marine resources are more important than money
- environmental responsibilities and stewardship are paramount over industrial economic development opportunities
- social responsibility to future generations and a commitment that future generations can live from the land are core values

First Nations repeatedly asserted the need to take the time to focus on local and regional values, goals and expectations and that these should be clearly addressed in reviews of LNG-driven project proposals.

Public and First Nations Concerns – BC Hydro Site C Dam Project

In the Northeast through late 2013 and early 2014, the independent Joint Review Panel conducted a review of BC Hydro’s proposed Site C dam on the Peace River. The review provided a unique single window into the views of Treaty 8 First Nations, municipal governments, local landowners, NGOs, business owners and the residents of the region concerning the future of the Northeast—not solely as it would be affected by the proposed construction of a third hydro–electric dam on the Peace River, but also in combination with current and anticipated LNG–driven hydrocarbon exploration and production and the residual impacts of previous industrial development in the region. A number of important issues emerged from the process including:

- The absence of sound and effective management of cumulative effects in the region
- The significant and massive social, economic and environmental costs resulting from the Project, most notably in the Peace River region, when traded–off against the need for Site C to meet the province’s future energy needs and the public justification for such a trade–off
- The limited capacity and preparedness of local and provincial governments to manage the pace and scale of multiple major developments in the region
- The low resilience and capacity of the region to carry the long–term and irreversible social, economic and environmental impacts introduced by Site C, along with those from LNG–driven development
- The cumulative effects from Site C on First Nations Treaty 8 rights and Aboriginal rights and traditional practices

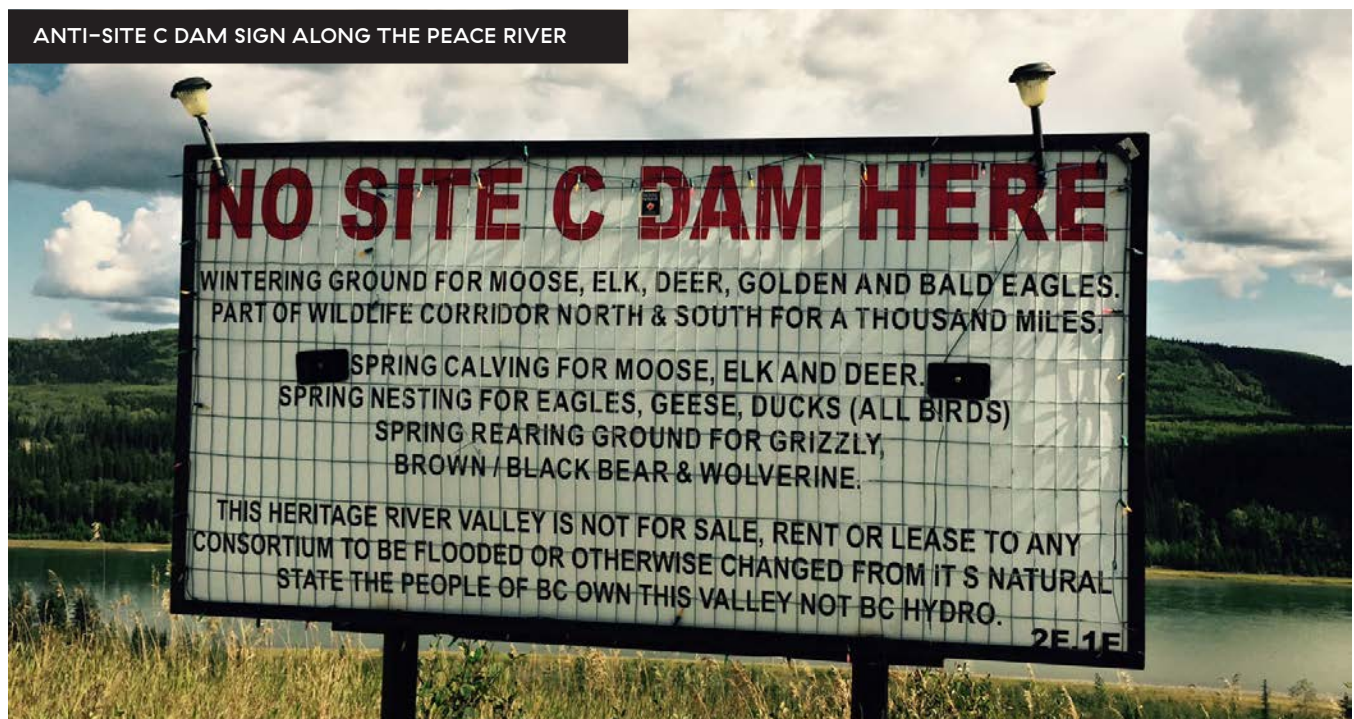


Photo: Hannah Askew

The Joint Review Panel's final report¹⁹ documents a list of significant losses that would include:

- Significant unmitigated losses to wildlife and rare plants, including species listed under the *Species at Risk Act*
- Significant and unmitigated losses to fish and fish habitat
- Loss of a way of life and social costs to farmers, ranchers, hunters and other users of the Peace River Valley
- Losses and changes to the current use of lands and waters by Treaty 8 and other First Nations and Métis whose rights in this regard are constitutionally protected

If tipping points are understood as points of no return that trigger the irreversible and the foreclosure of options, then the Site C hearings had much to say about BC Hydro's project as a tipping point for the Northeast. The Joint Panel's final report is unequivocal in this respect and characterizes many of these effects as large, permanent and irreversible. That the Northeast is approaching this point is not simply a function of the magnitude and scale of current and proposed future developments in the region, it also a consequence of residual, long-lasting socio-economic and environmental effects of past developments that mark the path of the region's history. It is this fundamental fact and the consequences that follow from it that distinguish the state of communities, the environment and landscapes in the Northeast from the Northwest. While the pace and scale of current and future developments are of common concern to people living in both regions, it is the full weight of the cumulative impacts of past developments that sets the Northeast region apart. The Joint Review Panel observed:

The Peace River region has been and is currently undergoing enormous stress from resource development. In this context, the Panel has determined that the Project, combined with past, present and reasonably foreseeable future projects would result in significant cumulative effects on fish, vegetation and ecological communities, wildlife, current use of lands and resources for traditional purposes, and heritage. In some cases, these effects are already significant, even without the Project. ²⁰

Many comments by First Nations and residents in the Peace River Valley expressed a widespread concern that the BC Hydro’s cumulative effects assessment of Site C was seriously flawed in its failure to adequately address the cumulative effects of past projects, including the previous two dams on the Peace. In addressing this concern the Panel concluded that, whether the Project proceeded or not, there was a need for a government–led regional environmental assessment including a baseline study and the establishment of environmental thresholds for use in evaluating the effects of multiple, projects in a rapidly developing region. On this basis the Panel recommended that:

Given the rapid developments foreseen for northeast B.C., Ministers may wish to consider commissioning a regional baseline study and environmental assessment as a public good and a basis for planning and regulating all activities requiring review. Such a study would greatly assist future proponents in all sectors, notably oil and gas, forestry, mining and energy production.²¹

To address the concern raised by many interveners regarding serious methodological issues associated with BC Hydro’s cumulative effects assessment, the Panel also called on the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency, regardless of whether the project proceeded or not to update its guidance on cumulative effects assessment.²²

As with the regulatory reviews of LNG–related pipeline project proposals that generated extensive public discussion and comment in the Northwest, during the same period, the Site C review consumed public attention and concern in the Northeast. The issues, comments and concerns that we have summarized from these reviews fuelled northern interest in the Dialogue Sessions and informed the discussion of participants. However, unlike the project–specific scope of these reviews, the Dialogue Sessions provided an opportunity for northerners to more fully explore a deeply troubling suite of issues that remains unresolved from these reviews: the desired course of development and development outcomes in the Northeast and Northwest in the context of LNG–driven development.

These are “big picture” issues that are beyond the scope of project–specific reviews, and yet vital to establishing a climate of investor certainty and public confidence in project–level decisions. They are big issues because they are regional in geographic scope and encompass large landscapes and watersheds; and they are big because their temporal horizons are broad encompassing the interests of current and future generations of British Columbians and the social, economic and environmental conditions that have been inherited from past decisions. Where and how they meet in the present is what we understand to be central to the management of cumulative effects. This was the focus of the Northern Dialogue on LNG.

THE DIALOGUE SESSIONS: WHAT WE LEARNED

The Dialogue Sessions indicate that there are a number of shared values between the residents of the Northwest and those of the Northeast. However, what distinguishes what we heard in each of these regions is the current state of conditions that are integral to safeguarding these values. The buffering capacity and resiliency of many socio-ecological conditions in the Northeast were viewed as thin at best as a result of the cumulative effects of past developments. Concerns in the region focused on how to manage future developments where the margin for error in future development approvals and in the effective management of project impacts was viewed as very low.

In the Northwest the cumulative effects of past development was relatively less of a concern than the perceived cumulative threats and impacts that could result from a tidal wave of proposed and announced, and, in some cases, approved, LNG-induced developments. Although current ecological conditions appear to be more robust in the Northwest, the magnitude and significance of the threats from these developments was perceived as great. The Northeast represents a case for the Northwest of how not to manage cumulative socio-economic and environmental effects.

Neither the Northwest nor the Northeast wants the legacy of developments in their respective regions to be landscapes of regret. In the Northeast time is running out to get it right. In the Northwest, the sense is that a host of short-sighted and narrowly-considered project-specific decisions, given the combined magnitude, scale and pace of those developments, can quickly alter and, in some instances, permanently and irreversibly alter the character and conditions that have been central to the region's identity and ways of life for generations of First Nations and non-First Nations people.

HOW TO SAFEGUARD COMMUNITY VALUES?



Photo: Neil Ever Osborne



Photo: WCEL

The Public Interest and Trade-Offs

Often a determining factor in justifying approval for development projects is that they are deemed by responsible authorities and assessment bodies to be in the public interest. The National Energy Board for instance is required by law to apply such a test.²³ However an ongoing challenge is how such determinations are reached.²⁴

Not all interests are created equal and the distribution of project costs and benefits are not evenly distributed locally, regionally, provincially and nationally. This point was made throughout the Dialogue sessions and in reviews of LNG-related development proposals with the simple message that local voices were effectively drowned out by the Province's focus on a broader public and provincial "good." There appeared to be a general consensus from participants that:

- local community and First Nation socio-economic, cultural and environmental values were not sufficiently recognized and understood in planning and development assessment processes
- socio-economic and environmental values were viewed in isolation from one another with little consideration of the linkages between them
- goals and objectives in regional resource management and land use plans, where they existed, were often outdated and typically glossed over these values and socio-ecological linkages
- local and regional interests were written-off against a broader and greater Provincial interest

Trade-offs between affected local, regional and provincial interests and affected social, economic and environmental conditions have been given little attention in discussions about future LNG-related developments specifically, and environmental assessments and approvals of major industrial projects generally. Addressing these trade-offs means first understanding what is at stake and for whom, and who bears the associated costs and at what price.

The Joint Review Panel for BC Hydro's Site C project provides an exception in this regard. In its report, the Panel is explicit about the trade-offs between valued socio-economic and environmental conditions and between local communities and the Northeast region on the one hand and the rest of the province on the other. It assigned a qualitative and quantitative cost to some of these conditions and recommended additional research and review by the BC Utilities Commission into the cost of others (such as the financial cost of electricity produced by the project and alternative sources). A final determination of the acceptability of and justification for these trade-offs was left to the Province.²⁵

Defining the public interest requires consultative processes and forms of public engagement that respect different public interests at different spatial scales and the associated values and valued conditions as they apply at these different scales. Where these interests diverge are grounds for processes to address them if not completely reconcile them. Left to the limited resources and time frames of environmental assessment processes existing public consultation processes will simply

perpetuate ongoing social conflicts and perceptions in the Northeast and Northwest of regions that are politically, economically and environmentally marginalized at the expense of benefits that flow to the rest of the province.

Public Engagement and Support

In both regions there was a general public sense of powerlessness, frustration and anger regarding individuals' perceived inability to influence and affect decisions that had and would have immediate and long-term repercussions on their economies, communities and environments. Public trust and confidence was low in the ability and willingness of the Province to engage local communities, First Nations, regional governments, non-government organizations and residents directly in processes and decisions affecting the course of future regional developments.

It was surprising that over the course of the Dialogue Sessions, at a time when the Province had launched provincial cumulative effects pilot projects and environmental stewardship discussions, there was little to no awareness of them by participants. Nor was there any apparent opportunity for non-government organizations to influence or contribute to provincial positions, policies and approaches to the development of cumulative effects assessment and management models and initiatives. Given the demonstrated expertise that exists in Northwest and Northeast, as well as in other parts of the province, at a minimum, where industry actors are engaged, a balanced opportunity could be provided to environmental and other civil society groups to develop better approaches assessing and managing future LNG-induced developments.



Photo: Hannah Askew

The Dialogue Sessions painted a picture of two solitudes: one in Victoria and the Lower Mainland perceived to hold decision-making authority to determine the economic and environmental fate of the Northeast and Northwest and reap the benefits of those decisions, and two northern regions that were largely powerless to alter the fate and associated costs of the pre-determined development scenarios that would befall them .

Much has been written, notably in British Columbia, in recent years about the cost of the social disconnect between local communities and First Nations on the one hand and industry and governments on the other with regard to public confidence and trust in extractive industry development decisions and commitments that will directly affect them.²⁶ This is frequently cited as the result of the failure by industry to obtain a “social license” or “social license to operate.”

Generally, social license refers to project acceptance if not outright approval obtained by development proponents from local communities in areas of operation as opposed to licenses, permits and other authorizations obtained from government. It is also a term that has been extended to apply to governments:

Where the community is sufficiently determined, social license can be denied to government as well as to industry. This happens when enough of the community believes the government is not shepherding Crown lands as well as they should.²⁷

The key elements associated with a social license from local communities extend from project conception through the life of a project and include trust, credibility, understanding, acceptance and respect. However, due to the time-limited legislated consultation periods in provincial and federal environment assessments, these reviews are typically too limited in themselves to secure public acceptance and resolve public differences.

In the Business Council of British Columbia’s Energy Bulletin the point is made that:

Despite owing a legal duty to consult with First Nations and legislated obligations under environmental assessment statutes, governments at all levels are challenged to develop and maintain the appropriate expertise and resources necessary to carry out such obligations.²⁸

If the absence of a social license is grounds for ongoing project, proponent and investor uncertainty, the same can be said to apply to affected local communities and residents. This is evident from the views expressed in the Dialogue Sessions.

The absence of formal processes and initiatives by governments and many development proponents to obtain a social license perpetuates a state of adversarial conditions that are in no one’s interest.²⁹ In the Dialogue Sessions, participants clearly expressed the need for formal structures and processes that could resolve differences amongst different stakeholders, businesses, industries and First

Nations and that could contribute to project-specific understandings, validate and re-affirm local values and contribute to a collective vision for the Northwest and Northeast of desired futures and outcomes.

We are reminded here of what is basic to the concept of participatory democracy: governments should create opportunities for all members of a population to make meaningful contributions to decision-making, and broaden the range of people who have access to such opportunities.

Sound, Impartial, Reliable and Relevant Information

Sound decisions are typically based on the best available information, and, where warranted, the precautionary principle, and a commitment to research that can address areas of agreed upon uncertainty. The Dialogue Sessions clearly indicated that local support for development decisions is predicated in part on decisions that are justified with a transparent link to the evidence that supports them. Public discontent with the Province's LNG-related management decisions was a reflection of public concern over the quality of the information that was used, how it was interpreted, an absence of precaution where important data and information gaps existed to assess risk, and the absence of commitments to address these gaps in a timely manner.

Decisions affecting future LNG-related development by the Province should be based on the best available information. This would include:

- data that is linked to identified and publicly-validated local and regional values for the purpose of measuring the state of associated conditions
- data with temporal parameters and sufficient data points that allow for assessment of the current state of conditions relative to past, present and future trends
- local and Indigenous knowledge and science-based knowledge that could contribute to multiple lines of evidence and technical review
- data bases and information that are subject to impartial third party interpretation and assessment
- identified data-gaps and data deficiencies associated with local and regional values and related conditions
- precautionary approaches reflecting levels of risk associated with data deficiencies and information gaps

Developing a Bigger Picture Assessment Process

LNG–induced developments that have been approved, proposed and announced have focused public attention on the pace and scale of development in the Northwest and Northeast and the ability and capacity of First Nations, governments, communities, and non–Indigenous citizens to manage the resulting socio–economic and environment impacts. These, combined with BC Hydro’s Site C project, have made the assessment, management and monitoring of cumulative effects, development options and the choice of futures an overriding public policy and political issue in northern British Columbia.

Four overriding questions driving the discussion and concerns expressed in the Dialogue Sessions were: What future will LNG–induced developments bring? Is this the future we want? Are there alternatives? And, if so, what are they?

These are questions that transcend public views of specific projects, and speak to a public desire to have a greater say in determining with greater certainty the future and desired outcomes that northerners want.

Surprisingly there was little awareness and little discussion of current initiatives by participants in the Dialogue Sessions of the Province associated with the development and implementation of the Cumulative Effects Assessment Framework and policy and the Environmental Stewardship Initiative to address the issue of cumulative effects management.³⁰ These provincial initiatives appear to be largely focused on better documenting and monitoring present–day ecological conditions and trends related to a limited number of values, rather than proactive regional assessment and planning.

It appears that there is less attention to addressing future developments beyond what is narrowly predictable or considered reasonably foreseeable—those that are currently in the docket of regulatory and permitting processes. But LNG developments and other large–scale projects typically induce a range of other future expansion and ancillary developments that carry their own suite of impacts that are not captured. More attention to future developments and a range of credible development scenarios is at the core of preparedness and the effective management of the pace and scale of development—both anticipated and unanticipated—and risk.

SCENARIO DEVELOPMENT

The Dialogue Sessions discussed possible future scenarios—best and worst cases—associated with future LNG developments. The discussion was an ad hoc means for identifying core socio-economic and environmental values and perceived levels of unacceptable risk.

To paraphrase an old saw, “the difficult thing about predicting cumulative effects is the future.” Unlike the past and present, there is no empirical evidence of the future. The future is speculative. Even present-day assumptions and forecasts about the near future have proved fragile as demonstrated by the collapse of global oil prices and commodity markets and their impacts on the British Columbia and larger Canadian economies over the last two years. In part, this is a problem with predicting and projecting a future based on past trends and current conditions. Formal exercises of scenario-building and scenario assessment provide a means to overcome this problem. The focus is not on prediction, but on conditions of resource development uncertainty—such as market boom and bust, public discord and debate, ambiguous and conflicting policy and planning guidance—to construct a range of probable and publicly accepted scenarios that can be assessed to identify the preparedness and management responses that would be required to protect core values and conditions. In turn, these management responses can be compared against existing management targets and thresholds for these conditions where they exist.

In response to the Site C Joint Panel’s recommendation for improved guidance on cumulative effects assessment, the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency (CEAA) has released in draft Technical Guidance for Assessing Cumulative Effects under the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act*.³¹ This guidance identifies the practice of scenario-building as a means for improving cumulative effects assessment of major projects that have been proposed or are anticipated. CEAA’s guidance gives further effect to an emerging technical literature and practice that has proposed and supported this approach for over a decade and, most recently, the Kitimat airshed emissions effects assessment.³²

The Dialogue Sessions on LNG suggest this is an approach that is worthy of pursuit in generating a collective vision of LNG-related futures in the Northwest and Northeast and alternatives that enjoy widespread community-based support.

BENCHMARKS, TARGETS AND THRESHOLDS

The Dialogue Sessions, in addition to reinforcing the need for community-based and community validated values in assessing cumulative effects, underscore the need for community-validated benchmarks, targets and thresholds for assessing and monitoring levels of acceptable risk associated with valued environmental and socio-economic conditions.

It is increasingly accepted³³ that tiered or graduated benchmarks and management thresholds are essential in understanding and comparing the potential risks under different scenarios to determine how much additional development could be accepted without causing unacceptable impacts to human health, community well-being and the environment. Thresholds are important in establishing tiered benchmarks that trigger management actions to maintain, enhance or restore valued conditions of sustainability.

The Dialogue Sessions indicate the broad objectives and targets in many existing resource management policies and plans as they currently apply in the Northwest and Northeast are not sufficient to stand-in as cumulative effects management thresholds, in that they are not sufficiently comprehensive and integrated across socio-economic environmental values and are not reflective of currently held public values and perceptions, and current science, traditional and local-based knowledge.³⁴ For some valued conditions, the best available information and the indicators that they support may not be sufficient or appropriate to address or reflect public perceptions of potential risk to these valued conditions.

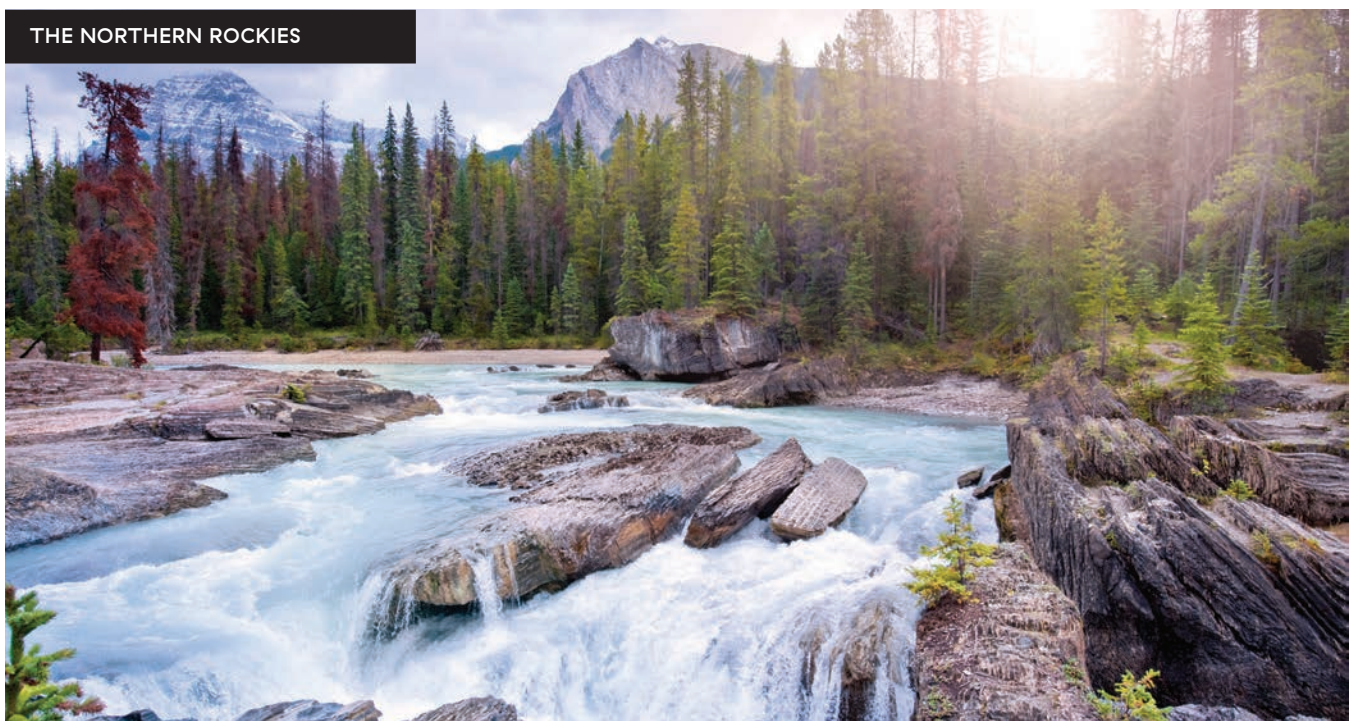


Photo: Unsplash

SUSTAINABILITY-BASED ASSESSMENT

The Dialogue sessions consistently focused on the long-term sustainability of valued socio-economic and environmental conditions and the legacy of cumulative effects that would be inherited by future generations living in the Northwest and Northeast. A general theme running through much of the discussion was the absence of an integrated approach to the assessment of LNG-induced developments—one that links issues and related socio-economic and ecological conditions, that spans variable scales of space and time, that looks forward and back, that includes a range of affected public interests and that considers the distribution of costs and benefits across these interests.

The panel report on the Lower Churchill Hydro Electric Generation Project clearly and succinctly captures this theme in stating the principal purpose of sustainability-based environmental assessment:

At the heart of the decision-making framework is the concept that the effects, risks and uncertainties of the Project should be fairly distributed among affected communities, jurisdictions and generations, and that the Project should result in net environmental, social and economic benefits.³⁵

There is more to an integrated approach to assessing the future of LNG-induced developments than enhanced coordination and cooperation amongst Provincial ministries and regulators, although this, too, is an important step. A cumulative effects assessment and management framework that adopted principles of sustainability, in so doing would apply an integrated approach that focused on the distribution of long-lasting net positive benefits and not simply impact mitigation. The basic (abridged) sustainability principles submitted by the Peace Valley Landowners Association to the Site C Panel provide an illustration³⁶:

- **Best options (overarching principle)**—Selection of the best option, including the null option, as the most desirable undertaking amongst the options available.
- **Maximum, mutually reinforcing, fairly distributed and lasting net gains**—The selected option delivers net progress towards meeting all the requirements for sustainability.
- **Avoidance of significant adverse effects**—The selected option avoids significant adverse effects on any component or relationship that is important for lasting wellbeing.
- **Minimization of trade-offs**—Compromises can be acceptable only if they avoid further decline or risk of decline, or improve prospects for resolving problems, in areas of concern properly identified as global, national and/or local priorities.
- **Commitment to fairness**—No current or future generation, and no geographic region, should bear an unreasonable share of the adverse effects, risks or costs of an approved undertaking or be denied a reasonable share of the benefits.

- **Recognition of uncertainty**—All evaluations and decision-making must give explicit attention to the significance and implications of uncertainties
- **Explicit and transparent justification**—All key proposals, recommendations and decisions—especially those that involve selection among options, predictions of significant benefits, and/or acceptance of significant adverse effects or trade-offs—must be accompanied by explicit, comprehensible and accessible justification.

A key goal of these principles is to achieve integrated solutions that provide overall immediate and long-term gains. The purpose is to reduce the need to consider a trade-off of negative effects in one area for positive effects in another.

The Dialogue Sessions appeal for new approaches to understanding and assessing the cumulative effects from LNG-induced developments. The Province’s Cumulative Effects Assessment Framework is a significant step in that direction but it lacks legal teeth and is not being applied in the context of proposed LNG development. A framework that applies sustainability principles and criteria could contribute to securing a sustainable future for the Northwest and Northeast.

ARE WILDLIFE AND COMMUNITY LIFE ABLE TO WITHSTAND LNG DEVELOPMENT?



Photo: Unsplash



REGIONAL STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Both inside and outside of the Dialogue Sessions we have heard and witnessed appeals for a regional strategic environmental assessment of LNG-related developments in the Northwest and Northeast.³⁷ In regions like the Northwest and Northeast, where citizens have experienced a pace and scale of development proposals and projects that outstrip public confidence in the capacity and ability of project proponents and governments to manage the resulting cumulative effects, these concerns are not surprising. In a climate where there is much that is uncertain about current and future development options and alternatives and associated outcomes, regional strategic environmental assessment could provide an important means for engaging the local and regional governments, First Nations, business groups, industry, non-government organizations and the general public in the preparation of preferred regional development strategies and environmental management frameworks.

As noted above, in 2009, the Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment (CCME) issued a report recognizing the role of regional strategic environmental assessment and their application in addressing conditions and issues like the ones described in the Dialogues. These transcend project-specific effects and focus on the combined and cumulative effects resulting from multiple projects and how these in turn inform judgments about individual projects and the developments that they may induce.

The CCME report observed:

R-SEA [Regional strategic environmental assessment] is designed to systematically evaluate the cumulative effects of multi-sector land and resource uses and surface disturbances under different future scenarios. The focus is on creating images of the future state of development, natural change, and cumulative change in a region, asking “what if” questions concerning alternative development options. The focus is on informing the development or evaluation of alternative strategic policies, plans, or programs for a region and then comparing those alternatives based on their potential for cumulative environmental change, and in consideration of various socio-economic, environmental, and planning objectives.³⁸

Implemented in the context of a government-to-government relationship with First Nations, regional strategic environmental assessments in the Northwest and Northeast could complement and add value to the Province's Cumulative Effects Assessment and Management Framework by:

- Addressing future development options in a proactive approach to inform present-day project-specific assessments
- Providing a public process to formally and fully engage residents and civil society groups in a review of LNG developments under different future development scenarios and to document the local, regional and province-wide public interests under these scenarios
- Assessing these scenarios of future LNG-induced development against regional values, management benchmarks, targets and thresholds, and local and regional management objectives to determine the preferred development option from development alternatives under each scenario
- Conducting an assessment of future LNG development scenarios to determine development strategies that would provide the greatest net contribution to sustainability in each of the regions and throughout the province rather than focusing solely on impact mitigation in project-specific assessment.

The Province's Cumulative Effects Assessment and Management Framework provides for periodic, broad-scale, forward-looking assessments. Regional strategic environmental assessments implemented in the Northwest and Northeast would be an effective means for implementing an important element of the Framework and afford a comprehensive and public process to address many of the issues and concerns raised in the Dialogue Sessions.

CONCLUSION

First Nations and non-Indigenous residents in the north are experiencing profound anxiety and frustration as a result of being alienated from environmental decision-making processes that affect their land, social relationships, and way of life. Northerners have lost faith in the government to effectively manage the cumulative impacts of the numerous development projects in progress and proposed on their lands. Going forward, regional strategic environmental assessment could offer a powerful tool to engage local residents in decision-making about the long-term future of their communities.

COMMUNITIES NEED A MEANS TO CONTROL THEIR FUTURES



Photo: Shutterstock

ENDNOTES

1 Forest Practices Board, Cumulative Effects: From Assessment Towards Management, Special Report, March 2011 , online: <<https://www.bcfpb.ca/reports-publications/reports/cumulative-effects-assessment-towards-management/>>.

2 Office of the Auditor General of British Columbia, An Audit of Biodiversity in BC: Assessing the Effectiveness of Key Tools, Report 10, February 2013; and Managing the Cumulative Effects of Natural Resource Development in BC, May 2015.

3 Report of the Joint Review Panel – Clean Energy Project, May 2014.

4 Forest Practices Board, Cumulative Effects: From Assessment Towards Management, Special Report, March 2011.

5 Lameman v Alberta (AG), 2013 ABCA 148 [Lameman] online: <http://www.albertacourts.ab.ca/jdb_new/public/ca/2003NewTemplate/ca/Civil/2013/2013abca0148.pdf>;

On March 3, 2015, Blueberry River First Nation (“BRFN”) sued the Province of BC regarding cumulative impacts of resource development on BRFN’s traditional territory and treaty rights. Ancestors of BRFN members are signatories to Treaty 8 with traditional territory in the in northeastern BC. The litigation directly impacts the development of BC Hydro’s planned Site C hydroelectric dam on the Peace River as well as development of the Montney gas fields located within BRFN’s traditional territory;

Tsilhqot’in Nation v British Columbia 2014 SCC 44j; Dene Tha’ First Nation v. British Columbia (Minister of Energy and Mines) 2013, BCSC 977; Mikisew Cree First Nation v. Canada (Minister of Canadian Heritage), 2005 SCC 69.

6 Province of British Columbia. Cumulative Effects Assessment and Management Framework Discussion Paper (March 2012).

7 BC Government. Environmental Stewardship Initiative Proposal Concept Paper, May 6, 2014, online: < http://fdms.ca/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/ESI_Concept_Draft-May-6-2014.pdf>; LNG Environmental Stewardship Initiative (ESI) Summary of Feedback Received, September 2, 2014, online: < [dms.ca/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/ESI_Concept_Draft-May-6-2014.pdf](http://fdms.ca/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/ESI_Concept_Draft-May-6-2014.pdf)>; LNG Environmental Stewardship Initiative Proposed Demonstration Project Proposal, January 9, 2014, online:< http://fdms.ca/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/ESI_Demonstration_Project_Proposal_January_9_2015.pdf>.

8 “Response from the Ministry of Forest, Lands and Natural Resource Operations” in Office of the Auditor General of British Columbia, Managing the Cumulative Effects of Natural Resource Development in BC, May 2015, pp. 9–14.

9 West Coast Environmental Law, “Toward a ‘More Planned Approach’ to IPP Projects in BC: Backgrounder on Strategic Environmental Assessment, Law Reform Papers, IPP Project Series, December, 2009; Environment Law Centre, University of Victoria, Request for an Environmental and Economic Assessment of BC LNG Proposals, Northwest Institute, 2013 , online: <<http://wcel.org/resources/publication/toward-planned-approach-ipp-projects-bc-strategic-environmental-assessment>>.

10 CCME, Regional Strategic Environmental Assessment in Canada: Principles and Guidance, Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment, Winnipeg, MB, 2009.

11 The Northern Dialogue on LNG provided an opportunity for dialogue between Indigenous and non-Indigenous residents facilitated by two non-governmental organizations. As noted at the dialogue sessions, these conversations did not constitute consultation for the purposes of discharging the Crown’s “duty to consult”. The outcomes from the dialogues and this report may not be used for any purpose related to Crown consultation without the explicit consent of impacted First Nations.

12 The questionnaire is provided in Appendix 1.

13 For detailed descriptions and pictures from the Dialogue Sessions, see the following blog posts: “West Coast and NWI Launch North Coast Community Dialogue Session Series on LNG and Cumulative Impacts Management” (Dec 2014), online: <<http://wcel.org/resources/environmental-law-alert/west-coast-and-nwi-launch-north-coast-community-dialogue-session-s>>; “Development, community and listening: Perspectives from community dialogues in Northwest BC” (March 2015), online: <<http://wcel.org/resources/environmental-law-alert/development-community-and-listening>>; “Learning on the Land about the Cumulative Effects of Industrial Development on Treaty 8 Territory” (July 2015), online: <<http://wcel.org/resources/environmental-law-alert/learning-land-about-cumulative-effects-industrial-development-trea>>

14 E.g., Kalum and Kispix Land and Resource Management Plans, West Babine Sustainable Resource Management Plan, South Nass Sustainable Resource Management Plan, Gitanyow Land Use Plan.

15 The Province’s Northeast Water Strategy was released in March 2015. Dialogue participants made only passing reference to the Province’s Northeast Water Strategy, which was released in March 2015.

16 It should be noted that no reference was made in the Dialogue Sessions to the BC Oil and Gas Commission’s report Area-based Analysis Results for Northeast British Columbia (December 2014). The Area-based Analysis approach was developed by the BC Oil and Gas Commission as a framework for managing the environmental and cultural impacts of oil and gas development. The approach integrates strategic direction from statutes, regulations and existing land-use plans with identified environmental and cultural values into a framework for assessing oil and gas activity. The report describes the rationale, indicators, triggers and nested values for five values: Hydro-riparian ecosystems (riparian habitat, water quantity); Old forest Resource features and cultural heritage resources; High-priority wildlife habitat, ecosystems and features; Boreal Caribou. There is no indication as to whether or not the report was made available for public comment and review prior to its release.

17 There is indication that 65% of the regional landscape has already been impacted by oil and gas development, logging, mines, dams and other industrial infrastructure, leaving few intact natural areas. Currently 4 percent of the Peace is protected and the provincial average is 12 percent. Some experts have suggested that 25 percent or more is now needed, given existing land alienations.

18 “Facilitator’s Report,” First Nations LNG Summit, Prince George, British Columbia, October 9–10, 2013, online <http://www.carriersekani.ca/images/docs/cstc/Facilitators%20Report_First%20Nations%20LNG%20Summit%20FINAL.pdf>

“Powering a Strong Economy: British Columbia’s LNG in the Global Market,” 2014 International LNG in BC Conference, May 21–23, 2014 Panel 204: First Nations Perspectives Panel Discussion

Leila Darwish, “LNG Pipedreams: Fractured futures and community resistance,” in Canadian Perspectives, Autumn 2014, online: <<http://www.canadians.org/sites/default/files/publications/LNG-pipedreams.pdf>>

19 Report of the Joint Review Panel – Clean Energy Project, May 2014.

20 Ibid., p. v.

21 Ibid., p. 322.

22 Ibid., p. 323.

23 In the Report of the Joint Review Panel for the Enbridge Northern Gateway Project (Volume 2) the Panel held that “the public interest is inclusive of all Canadians, locally, regionally, and nationally, and refers to the integration of environmental, societal, and economic considerations. A determination in the public interest is based on findings of fact and a review of scientific and technical information....

The National Energy Board Act requires the Panel to consider any public interest that may be affected by granting or refusing the application. The Panel considers the burdens the project could place on Canadians, and the benefits the project could bring to Canadians.” (p.8)

24 As Jeffrey Simpson has wryly observed: “The three–person National Energy Board panel that exhaustively studied the pipeline proposal—and supported it, with 209 conditions—declared that “the public interest is the interest of all Canadians.” Except that in the next paragraph the panel said “the public interest is local, regional and national in scope.” It’s hard for the “public interest” to be both.” Jeffrey Simpson, “Define ‘Consultation’ and ‘Social License’”, in the *Globe and Mail*, October 22, 2014.

25 Several other panel reviews have squarely addressed the matter of net negative trade–offs—their avoidance through project alternatives and the grounds for their justification as a measure of last resort. See also Joint Review Panel Report, Kemess North Copper–Gold Mine Project, September 17, 2007; Report of the Joint Review Panel for the Mackenzie Gas Project, Foundation for a Sustainable Northern Future, December 2006. As well, see Marvin Shaffer & Associates Ltd. An Assessment of the Benefit–Cost Trade–Off Of the Proposed Kemess North Project prepared for Chief Rena Benson Gitksan House of Nii Kyap, September 25, 2006; R. Gibson, “Avoiding Sustainability Trade–Offs in Environmental Assessment” in *Impact Assessment and Project Appraisal* 31⑩: 2–12. 2013.

26 Michelle Pockey, “Lessons Learned for the Prosperity Mine Decision: Enhancing Project Certainty through a Social License Strategy.” Business Council of British Columbia, Environment and Energy Bulletin, Vol. 3⑩, January 2011, online: <http://www.carriersekani.ca/images/docs/cstc/Facilitators%20Report_First%20Nations%20LNG%20Summit%20FINAL.pdf>

Fred Bunnell, “Social License in British Columbia: Some Implications for Energy Development.” *Journal of Ecosystems and Management*, Vol. 14②, 1– 16, 2013, online: <<http://jem.forrex.org/index.php/jem/article/view/550>>

Jeffrey Simpson, “Define ‘Consultation’ and ‘Social License’”, in the *Globe and Mail*, October 22, 2014.

Jeffrey Simpson, “Getting to Yes has never been tougher”, in the *Globe and Mail*, February 25, 2015.

27 Fred Bunnell, “Social License in British Columbia: Some Implications for Energy Development.” at p. 5.

28 Michelle Pockey, “Lessons Learned for the Prosperity Mine Decision: Enhancing Project Certainty through a Social License Strategy” at pp. 5–6.

29 Simpson, Jeffrey, “Define ‘Consultation’ and ‘Social License’”and “Getting to Yes has never been tougher”, in the *Globe and Mail*, February 25, 2015.

30 Province of British Columbia, Cumulative Effects Assessment and Management Framework, Discussion Paper, March 2012.

Province of British Columbia, Addressing Cumulative Effects in Natural Resource Decision–Making: A Framework for Success, CEF Overview Report, February 2014.

Province of British Columbia, Linkages between the LGN Environmental Stewardship Initiative and Resource Management in BC, Discussion Paper, Final Draft, May 7, 2015.

31 Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency, Technical Guidance for Assessing Cumulative Environmental Effects under the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, 2012, Draft, December, 2014.

32 For example, see the assessment of future emissions scenarios in the Kitimat airshed in Essa Technologies, Kitimat Airshed Emissions Effects Assessment, Prepared for British Columbia Ministry of Environment, Environmental Protection Program, April 25, 2014, at p.5.

See also:

Lorne Greig and Peter Duinker, Scenarios of Future Developments in Cumulative Effects Assessment (2007), online: <www.ceaa.gc.ca/155701CE-docs/ESSA_Technologies-eng.pdf>

Report of the Joint Review Panel for the Mackenzie Gas Project., Foundations for a Sustainable Future.

CCME, Regional Strategic Environmental Assessment in Canada: Principles and Guidance, at pp. 6–7.

Peter N. Duinker and Lorne A. Greig, “Scenario Analysis In Environmental Impact Assessment: Improving Explorations Of The Future” in *Environmental Impact Assessment Review* 27 (2007) 206–219.

Peggy Holroyd, Jennifer Grant, Simon Dyer, *Scenario Analysis: A Best Practice Approach to Assessing the Cumulative Impacts of the Mackenzie Gas Project*. Pembina Institute, August, 2007

33 Essa Technologies, *Kitimat Airshed Emissions Effects Assessment*, Prepared for British Columbia Ministry of Environment, Environmental Protection Program; Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency, *Technical Guidance for Assessing Cumulative Environmental Effects under the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, 2012* at p. 37.; CCME, *Regional Strategic Environmental Assessment in Canada: Principles and Guidance* at pp. 11, 17 & 21.

34 One of the earliest and only studies to address cumulative effects thresholds in support of improved project-specific cumulative effects assessment was prepared over a decade ago for the BC Oil and Gas Commission in northeast British Columbia. See Axys Environmental Consulting, *A Cumulative Effects Assessment and Management Framework (CEAMF) for Northeast British Columbia*, prepared for the BC Oil and Gas Commission and the Muskwa-Kechika Advisory Board, Final Report (2 vols). March 2003. The report, while narrow with respect to the valued conditions that it identifies, could provide a helpful point of departure for future public discussions in the Northeast regarding new and revised cumulative effects management benchmarks and thresholds.

35 Joint Review Panel for the Lower Churchill Hydroelectric Generation Project), Report of the Joint Review Panel, August 2011, at Appendix 8, p. 352, online: <<http://www.ceaa-acee.gc.ca/O52/document-eng.cfm?did=53120>>

36 Correspondence from Ken Boone, President, Peace Valley Land Owners Association to Courtney Trevis, Panel Co-Manager Site C Review Panel Secretariat, (nd) at pp. 2–3, online: <https://uwaterloo.ca/sustainability-assessment-project/sites/ca.sustainability-assessment-project/files/uploads/files/gibson_site_c_sust_frame_pvla_sub_31oct13.pdf>

The unabridged principles are listed as follows:

Best options (the overarching principle)

The final decision identifies the most desirable undertaking and project/planning details among the options available, including the null option, in light of the evidence available and the uncertainties surrounding that evidence and the case in general. Desirability is determined through comparative examination of prospects for durable positive overall effects (contributions to progress towards sustainability) while avoiding risk of significant adverse effects, and minimizing trade-offs.

Maximum, mutually reinforcing, fairly distributed and lasting net gains

The selected option delivers net progress towards meeting all the requirements for sustainability, through cumulative positive effects that are mutually reinforcing and contribute to lasting benefits that enhance equity within and among generations. Progress towards sustainability requires positive steps in all areas, at least in general and at least in the long term.

Avoidance of significant adverse effects

The selected option avoids significant adverse effects on any component or relationship that is important for lasting wellbeing. No significant adverse effect can be justified unless the unavoidable alternative is a more significant adverse effect. Incomplete mitigation of a significant adverse effect is not acceptable if stronger mitigation or avoidance efforts are feasible.

Minimization of trade-offs

Because improvements in durable socio-economic wellbeing and long term biophysical stewardship are interdependent as well as crucial, trade-offs are undesirable. The burden for justifying any trade-off lies with the proponent of the activity that would entail the trade-off. Compromises can be acceptable only if they avoid further decline or risk of decline, or improve prospects for resolving problems, in areas of concern properly identified as global, national and/or local priorities.

Commitment to fairness

No current or future generation, and no geographic region, should bear an unreasonable share of the adverse effects, risks or costs of an approved undertaking or be denied a reasonable share of the benefits. Because future generations cannot be at the table to defend their interests, there can be no justification for displacement of significant adverse effects from the present to the future unless all other options involve worse prospects for the future.

Recognition of uncertainty

All evaluations and decision making must give explicit attention to the significance and implications of uncertainties and adopt precautionary approaches, especially where there may be risks of significant adverse effects. This includes favouring options with low risk and adaptive characteristics.

Explicit and transparent justification

All key proposals, recommendations and decisions—especially those that involve selection among options, predictions of significant benefits, and/or acceptance of significant adverse effects or trade-offs—must be accompanied by explicit, comprehensible and accessible justification that clearly states and applies sustainability-based evaluation and decision criteria that incorporate attention to context specific priorities and respect the principles outlined above.

37 West Coast Environmental Law, *Toward a More Planned Approach to IPP Projects in BC: Backgrounder on Strategic Environmental Assessment*, Law Reform Papers, IPP Project Series, December 2009, online: <<http://wcel.org/resources/publication/toward-planned-approach-ipp-projects-bc-strategic-environmental-assessment>>; West Coast Environmental Law, *Building a Lasting Legacy – Safeguarding What We Value. A Regional Strategic Approach to Liquefied Natural Gas Development in BC*, n.d.; Calvin Sanborn et al., *Request to Ministers Aglukkaq and Polak for a Strategic Economic and Environmental Assessment of Liquid Natural Gas Development in British Columbia*, Prepared by the University of Victoria Law Centre on behalf of Northwest Institute for Bioregional Research, August 1, 2013.

38 CCME, *Regional Strategic Environmental Assessment in Canada: Principles and Guidance*, Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment, Winnipeg, MB, 2009 at p. 7.

APPENDICES



APPENDIX 1: CHETWYND

Invitation Session | Wednesday, May 13th, 2015 | 1pm

QUESTION 1

**What do you love most about living in Chetwynd? What are the values that matter most to you?
Examples: salmon, caribou, wilderness, health, and economic well-being.**

Natural Environment and Wild Foods

We can go out on the land and pick berries and hunt moose—this is an important food source. First Nations still rely on medicinal and edible plants.

Fish are an important resource. We have Lake trout, Northern Pike, Ling Cod, Grayling, and Rocky Mountain White Fish. We still have a population of healthy, large ungulates.

It's free to go out camping any time.

There are still areas to practice our cultural history and tradition, although in some cases this has had to be adapted due to encroachment. There are cultural camps still intact.

“The environment is our recreation and entertainment in the Peace.”

Community and Social Well-being

Non-Indigenous people who live here chose to live here. There's an overall, strong connection to the land.

We're relatively small, tightknit communities. We know our neighbours and we're always willing to lend a helping hand*. There's a strong sense of community in the Peace Region.

QUESTION 2

Which values do you see as most resilient and which do you see as most vulnerable to the impacts of industrial development?

RESILIENT VALUES

Our communities are resilient.

VULNERABLE VALUES

Community and Social Well-Being

“There’s serious emotional impacts, debts, abuse, substance abuse, and mental health issues that come with boom and bust industries.”

Treaty rights are vulnerable.

Our community is also vulnerable. Transient populations represent major changes for our communities and shift our population and demographics.

Work camps put a strain on our community and impact the overall health of our communities.

Health care workers and the whole healthcare system is threatened by an influx of transient workers. So is our policing and other infrastructure and services in the region.

Natural Environment

Our water systems are vulnerable to more industrial pressure. The water, land, wetlands, and air is all vulnerable.

The wildlife is vulnerable to more disturbances on the land.

Agriculture and farmers’ livelihoods are vulnerable to increased industrial development.

Good community jobs are being replaced by industry jobs. Employment for First Nations is mainly in labour or environmental monitoring.

QUESTION 3

Do you know of a plan that exists in your community or region to manage the impacts upon some of the values we have identified? What are the consequences of a failure to manage such impacts?

Plans

- Northeast Water Strategy (in progress)
- Treaty 8 Regional–Strategic Environmental Assessment Framework
- West Moberly Regional–Strategic Environmental Assessment Framework
- Environmental Stewardship Initiatives
- Reclamation Initiatives
- Saulteau First Nation is working with Forest, Lands, and Natural Resources Office to develop a moose management plan and protected areas

One of the costs of a failure to manage—industry bears the cost of a lack of trust. It’s hard to obtain social license.

There’s too much secrecy among government. We need open and honest communication.

Resources to engage with initiatives are limited.

Government misinterprets what is being said, and that creates an overall distrust.

“There are three provincial parks that haven’t come to fruition, but oil and gas wells abound.”

QUESTION 4

What practical steps do you think need to be taken in order to address the current shortcomings with regards to protecting vulnerable values? Examples: a regulatory regime accounting for overall airshed quality, a weekly forum to discuss community tensions and concerns that flow from provincial decisions, or an analysis of community water quality as it relates to health.

We need to obtain the political will to implement monitoring and plans.

There has to be honest studies that reveal the impacts of oil and gas.

Northern communities need more time for fair negotiations. Everything is rushed and big decisions are made under too tight timelines.

“We need a fair distribution of benefits for northern communities and First Nations.”

There are too many hunting permits allowed in the region—we should decrease the amount of hunting.

Sump pits and ponds need better fencing to keep animals away from contaminants. They are drinking it and getting sick.

QUESTION 5

What pace and scale of development is acceptable? Why? What pace and scale is unacceptable? Why?

“The current rate of development is unacceptable. We don’t know the impacts of fracking yet, but there’s still just more and more infrastructure being put in place.”

If proper consultation and adequate environmental protections are in place, then that is an acceptable level of development.

There should be sustainable management plans and industry should have full disclosure of future plans.

We need to have a full consideration of other developments, including forestry, mining, and oil and gas.

Development is happening way too fast. We need to slow the pace down, one project at a time.

The pace needs to be slower so there can be meaningful consultation prior to development.

“Companies know how to keep projects under the size so they can avoid assessment. This isn’t responsible or fair development.”

QUESTION 6

From the perspective of the values identified in Question 1, describe a plausible best-case future scenario within the next 10 years.

“Industry partners with communities instead of just telling people what they will be doing.”

First Nations practice their treaty rights. Treaty takes control of their land and resources and protects the region.

Government truly represents the interests of the people in the region and there is full, ongoing disclosure and dialogue.

Communities create strategies, and the government follows these regulations.

More than 4% of the Peace Region is protected (the provincial average is 12%). River corridors are protected. Traditional territories are guarded, and historic sites are protected.

Local people are involved in the early stages of planning so appropriate changes and alterations can be made. Social impacts on local communities will be considered before projects proceed.

Impacted areas are reclaimed and protected. There’s more local control over the pace of development, and there’s long-term management plans in place to help protect local communities and resources.

There is a moratorium on using fresh water to frack. First Nations and local communities issue water permits, not the Oil and Gas Commission (OGC).

There’s more capacity for First Nations band staff to have comparable pay to OGC and Province.

Our young people are out on the land learning how to survive. There are cultural camps to connect our young people with our land and culture.

ATTENDEES		
Name	Occupation	Community
Appaw, Ray		Blueberry River First Nation
Brown, Edna		West Moberly First Nation
Burkhart, Tim	Yellowstone to Yukon, Peace River Break Coordinator	Chetwynd
Connolly, Kathleen	Dawson Creek Chamber of Commerce	Dawson Creek
Gauthier, Derald	Saulteau First Nation	Saulteau Reserve
Gauthier, Myron	Saulteau First Nation	Saulteau Reserve
Gauthier, Geraldine	Saulteau First Nation	Saulteau Reserve
MacGarbitt, Fernie	Saulteau Treaty and Lands Department	Saulteau Reserve
Martens, Cheryl	Treaty 8 Tribal Association, LNG Coordinator	
McArthur, Lisa	West Moberly First Nation	
Podolecki, Mike	Chetwynd Northern Health	Chetwynd
Shaw, Julie	District of Chetwynd Healthy Communities Coordinator	Chetwynd

APPENDIX 2: FORT ST. JOHN

Invitation Session | Tuesday, May 12th, 2015 | 1pm

QUESTION 1

What do you love most about living in the Peace Region? What are the values that matter most to you? Examples: salmon, caribou, wilderness, health, and economic well-being.

Environment and Wildlife

“There is a strong and powerful intrinsic value in simply observing the natural landscape here.”

Rich agriculture provides an important food supply.

We don’t have to go far to be out in nature, and there is a great sense of wilderness here. There is plenty of wildlife here and we can still see them out on the natural landscape.

People have a strong attachment to, and knowledge of the land.

We have beautiful protected areas with healthy animal populations. There’s still important and intact places, such as Moberly Lake.

“It’s so peaceful here, although we’re starting to see more and more ‘no entry’ signs now.”

Social Well-Being and Community

There is a great sense of community in the Peace Region. The energy of this place is exceptional—the people are dynamic, intelligent, and committed.

There is strong social cohesion amongst the people living here. The strength of our people and community is great.

The First Nations here are very strong and we have Treaty Rights.

There’s opportunities here for young people—there’s opportunity for them to grow.

QUESTION 2

Which values do you see as most resilient and which do you see as most vulnerable to the impacts of industrial development?

RESILIENT VALUES

The landscape is resilient.

The supply and quality of the Upper Peace watershed above the Moberly and Pine Rivers is resilient. This is also a vulnerable value. Water in general is vulnerable to water licensing grabs for fracking operations and oil activity in the region.

“Jobs and the economy could be seen as resilient, but they are also vulnerable to a transient workforce and the global markets.”

VULNERABLE VALUES

Natural Environment

The interconnectedness of the natural environment and our communities is vulnerable.

The natural environment around oil and gas wells is leading to contamination and impacting the health of our people.

The protection of our land and our way of life is being impacted. The quality of our air is jeopardized by industry.

Healthy watershed functioning is vulnerable due to sedimentation and storage and flow changes. This has implications for wetlands and the connection that water has to agriculture in the region.

Way of Life and Treaty Rights

The integrity of, and adherence to, our treaty is vulnerable. The relationship between First Nations and the Crown is vulnerable because the Crown promised it would always protect the way of life here.

There are real socio-economic impacts—people are experiencing poverty in our communities. On the flipside, there’s quick money in the region and that leads to social problems, like gangs.

Landowners’ way of life is at risk.

Our food supply is vulnerable to the development of the Site C dam. There would be massive flooding of arable lands in the region if that project is built.

Wildlife and Habitat Fragmentation

“The ‘grab and go’ mentality of workers in the region is tearing the community apart, especially the most vulnerable people in our region.”

The Caribou population is vulnerable to changing predator–prey relationships as a result of development. All species in this region are declining, and Caribou are valuable for cultural and food harvesting. Caribou are an important indicator of biodiversity and ecosystem health.

Moose are vulnerable to development and habitat fragmentation.

QUESTION 3

Do you know of a plan that exists in your community or region to manage the impacts upon some of the values we have identified? What are the consequences of a failure to manage such impacts?

Plans

- Land Resource Management Plan (needs to be reviewed)
- Muskwa – Kechika
- Peace River Regional District Comprehensive Plan (although this is limited to private land so has no jurisdiction over Crown land)
- Kiskatinaw Watershed Management Plan
- Moberly Watershed Plan
- Doig River First Nation Tribal Park

There’s a lack of political will to implement some of these plans, and overall, there is a lack of continued engagement among citizens after plans have been created.

The Peace Region has been promoted as an economic breadbasket rather than for the other values that we hold, such as tourism and agricultural production.

The Oil and Gas Commission has too much power to make decisions on the land base and does not consider existing plans. There is no incentive for industry to look at cumulative impacts in this region.

The approval process for development is fragmented and there is no ‘big picture’ management approach. The process needs to be fair for everyone and also needs to address all different types of development.

There is no plan in all of Northeast BC that accommodates First Nations and our way of life or inherent values.

“This part of the province has less than 3.4% of the protected areas in BC.”

QUESTION 4

What practical steps do you think need to be taken in order to address the current shortcomings with regards to protecting vulnerable values? Examples: a regulatory regime accounting for overall airshed quality, a weekly forum to discuss community tensions and concerns that flow from provincial decisions, or an analysis of community water quality as it relates to health.

The Oil and Gas Commission needs to be an independent and objective regulator, and we need transparent reporting and data sharing.

There should be a strong, sound, technical review of existing plans for the Peace Region.

There needs to be strong watershed management steps. That should include: Baseline assessment; determining where aquifers are so they can be protected; and a greater understanding of watershed function.

“We need to be solutions-based and address the real issues of First Nations and landowners in the region.”

We need to eliminate the province in negotiations so we’re managing the area on a government-to-government basis.

We need to take the time to forecast future scenarios and understand the various impacts, such as demands on our water.

QUESTION 5

What pace and scale of development is acceptable? Why? What pace and scale is unacceptable? Why?

“Development is increasing and it’s not sustainable.”

We need to reduce the amount of unrefined products being shipped out. There should be value added to all resources extracted from our region.

There are too many EA processes and too little time.

The current pace and approach is far past what is acceptable. Companies are trying to manage impacts, but it’s impossible with the gold rush approach to development.

Regarding the oil and gas development at Pink Mountain: There’s a large, transient workforce in place. This needs to slow down because local people are being impacted by increased traffic and cattle deaths.

We need to understand the impacts before approving export licenses and issuing environmental assessment certificates.

“This siloed approach to looking at each development separate from the rest is completely unacceptable.”

QUESTION 6

From the perspective of the values identified in Question 1, describe a plausible best-case future scenario within the next 10 years.

“Industry, government, conservation groups, and First Nations sit down as a team to work things out, set standards, identify and no-go zones.”

There is co-management with all Treaty 8 Nations and we have country harvest food management plans.

We find a balance and achieve sustainable development. Pace does not outpace capacity.

We are able to say “no” and decide what development will proceed and what will not. Industries work together with communities to figure out what the area can handle.

We have diversified industries and economies. There’s new economic opportunities outside of the extractive resource development—there’s renewable energy, tourism, and agriculture is thriving.

We have some protections in place for critical watershed and wetlands. Industry is willing to support management plans.

We will forecast out 300 years rather than speeding up extraction and development.

Wildlife habitat is protected and Land Use Plans are honoured.

The remaining landscape is managed for conservation that is set aside for long enough so that we can determine whether restoration in other areas is possible.

ATTENDEES		
Name	Occupation	Community
Ackerman, Andy	Myriad Consulting	Fort St. John
Acko, Sam	Doig River First Nation	Doig River
Badenhorst, Charl	Doctor, Northern Health	Fort St. John
Evans, Larry	Municipal Councillor	Fort St. John
Goodings, Karen	Peace River Regional District	Cecil Lake
Holderling, Jacqueline	Fort St. John Metis Society	Fort St. John
Jonsson, Corey	Oil and Gas Commission	Fort St. John
Keutz, Kate	Farmer's Institute	Fort St. John
Klassen, Gord	Municipal Councillor	Fort St. John
Lieverse, Brian	Encana	Fort St. John
Logan, Liz	Chief Councillor, Fort Nelson First Nation	Fort Nelson
Lowe, Lana	Director of Lands and Natural Resources, Fort Nelson First Nation	Fort Nelson
MacDougall, Sarah	Northern Health	Fort St. John
MacEwan, Patti	Northern Health	Fort St. John
Marsh, Karla	Community Bridge	Fort St. John
Richert, Jeff	Treaty 8 Tribal Association	Fort St. John
Sawchuck, Wayne	Enviro Consulting	Fort St. John
Scott, Bronwyn	Northeast News	Fort St. John
Sperling, Brad	Peace River Regional District	
Tsakoza, Sharon	Treaty 8 Tribal Association, CLO Referral Clerk	Fort St. John
Whitten, Reg	InterraPlan Inc.	Moberly Lake
Webb, Jim	Advisor, West Moberly First Nation	
Zabinsky, Tony	Chamber of Commerce	Fort St. John

APPENDIX 3: HAZELTON

Public Session | Thursday, February 5th, 2015 | 6:30pm

QUESTION 1

**What do you love most about living in Hazelton? What are the values that matter most to you?
Examples: salmon, caribou, wilderness, health, and economic well-being.**

Clean Air and Water

The proximity to wilderness and the rivers and mountains here makes this place like nowhere else.

It's isolated and quiet here, and there's environmental balance.

Traditional and local foods

Fishing and wildlife are an important component to our livelihoods here. We still know how to harvest our own food. We are connected to the land.

Salmon is our vitality. It's our money and our sustenance.

We have food security because we're self-sufficient.

Community and Culture

The land, community, and culture here are totally intertwined.

We have a proud history and a direct connection with our cultural heritage. There's strength in our communities and the people in Hazelton.

We have strong social networks and a great sense of community in the Hazeltons. We have a good connection with all of our neighbouring communities. We're all close but it's not over-crowded.

We have a strong desire to protect our home.

There's an overall sense of well-being here—we get that from our connection to the land.

Cross-cultural understanding. We are artistically rich.

There's a strong sense of social capital—people look after each other here.

Great Indigenous political strength.

“We have a proud history here and a direct connection to our heritage. Everything about our way of life is tied to the territory.”

QUESTION 2

Which values do you see as most resilient and which do you see as most vulnerable to the impacts of industrial development?

RESILIENT VALUES

“Everything is interconnected.”

Our communities are resilient. We have strong extended families and our people are resilient.

The Gitksan culture is resilient, and so is our local knowledge.

Nature and the natural environment is resilient.

We have people with vision, and great strength in our Indigenous political systems.

“All of our values are resilient, but they have limits. ”

VULNERABLE VALUES

Services and Infrastructure

The Hagwilget Bridge is a single-lane, wooden bridge. It can't handle a serious increase in traffic. Our hospital is already maxed out.

Our community is vulnerable, especially our women.

Living off the land — harvesting and farming. Our food security and self-sufficiency is at risk if we become too dependent on outside industries.

The ecosystem is vulnerable. If one piece is damaged, all of the other pieces suffer [because it's all connected].”

Our intact water and clean air are at risk.

“Our communities are both resilient and vulnerable.”

QUESTION 3

Do you know of a plan that exists in your community or region to manage the impacts upon some of the values we have identified? What are the consequences of a failure to manage such impacts?

“There is no real plan in place to protect the values of the community.”

Everything we’re doing is reactive. Our communities, the entire region, and the province—there is no plan.

If we don’t plan properly, we’re going to have another boom and BUST!

If or when a plan is made in Ottawa, there is no connection within the community.

If there is no proper planning now, there’s the potential for real devastation and losing one of the last ‘intact’ place on Earth.

We have Delgamuukw—our Aboriginal rights are recognized. We have our own Gitksan law.

“There hasn’t been enough time to plan.
Everything has been so rushed.”

QUESTION 4

What practical steps do you think need to be taken in order to address the current shortcomings with regards to protecting vulnerable values? Examples: a regulatory regime accounting for overall air shed quality, a weekly forum to discuss community tensions and concerns that flow from provincial decisions, or an analysis of community water quality as it relates to health.

“Local people need to be in the driver’s seat.
We need to be able to control what’s going on.”

Groups and proponents should work together. All the First Nations people need to work together.

The province and gas companies should increase services and support.

We should draw on other communities’ experiences

We need an organization with teeth — with the power to do something. We should have a local committee or organization to help lobby government and industry to be more accountable and increase communications. We need accurate information.

“We have to assert our local authority.”

There should be more open forums [like this one] where all parties come together to voice their concerns.

Need to strengthen the support between Indigenous and non-Indigenous community members.

Focus on small-scale, sustainable processing.

This region should focus on community-led development that really builds skills for our own self-sufficiency.

Continue to uphold Indigenous governance structures.

QUESTION 5

What pace and scale of development is acceptable? Why? What pace and scale is unacceptable? Why?

“The community should really set the timeline when we’re looking at new development projects.”

Development should not outpace communications and consultation.

The timeline must fit with decisions based on the number of projects moving forward. We need sufficient time to digest and review the projects that are proposed in our territory.

We have to make sure that environmental safety and concerns are assessed. We have to look at cumulative impacts.

We need a pace that leaves a livable Earth for future generations.

QUESTION 6

From the perspective of the values identified in Question 1, describe a plausible best-case future scenario within the next 10 years.

“We have united community control and consensus over project.”

We have Aboriginal title over our lands.

We have a solar development project that provides employment and also operates as a model that keeps money local.

Healthcare, education, and wellness are the driving force for development, rather than development dictating how these values are implemented within communities.

Large-scale development evaporates and small-scale, sustainable development takes over.

No new pipeline routes.

There is local, sustainable, and diverse employment with local training opportunities.

There’s an increase in gardens and agriculture. Alternative energy, like solar, is common.

Local people and communities help to make decisions about regulations and decide which industries they want in their backyards.

Respect for communities and Canadian citizenship.

Development is based on community input and interests. The community controls what projects move forward in their communities.

Human health is a management objective.

We have small-scale farming and plenty of local greenhouses and gardens.

ATTENDEES		
Name	Occupation	Community
Barnes, Pam		Kispiox
Barnes, Bob		Kispiox
Barnes, Scott		Kispiox
Blackwater, Bill		Kispiox
Brady, Alf		Kispiox
Brady, Ruth		Kispiox
Brauer, Deborah		Kispiox
Corbett, Julia		Kispiox
Eckfeldt, Kate		Kispiox
Hibbard, Dana		2 Mile
Holland, Richard		Kispiox
Jeffrey, Monica		Glen Vowell
Johnson, Gilbert		Kispiox
Jonhson, Mike		Gitanmaax
Joseph, Larry		Hazelton
Lagass-Morgan, Chelsie		Kispiox
Lattie, Yvonne		New Hazelton
MacKay, Lee		Hazelton
Maitland, Alice		Hazelton
Maitland, Julie		Hazelton
Muir, Peggy		Hazelton
Pritchard, Brian		Kispiox
Purcohela, Daren		2 Mile
Zazula, Chris		South Hazelton

APPENDIX 4: KITIMAT

Invitation Session | Tuesday, February 3rd, 2015 | 1pm

Question 1

What do you love most about living in Kitimat? What are the values that matter most to you?

Examples: salmon, caribou, wilderness, health, and economic well-being.

Clean Air & Water

We have clean air here and the ability to live a healthy lifestyle.

Clean water and healthy fish. The land provides important nutrients to local people. We have the ability to harvest fresh food.

We have the ability to hike and fish and camp. There's plenty of outdoor activities conveniently nearby.

We have affordable housing and this is a safe, small community.

There's economic diversity and a good selection of local employment opportunities in Kitimat.

"We have roots and pride in our home. This is the only place I've ever called home."

Healthy Communities

It's not the big city, we have a relaxed lifestyle here.

There's plenty of outdoor activities and we can go fishing and hunting.

We have a multi-cultural community and overall economic well-being.

"This is just a special place. There's a real sense of uniqueness here."

QUESTION 2

Which values do you see as most resilient and which do you see as most vulnerable to the impacts of industrial development?

RESILIENT VALUES

We have resilient people. We've always learned to adapt to the natural surroundings.

Economic development is resilient, and community entrepreneurship.

VULNERABLE VALUES

Our clean air and water is threatened.

An affordable cost of living is vulnerable to market pressures if Kitimat goes through another "boom." Lower-income people who are sometimes long-time residents can no longer afford to live here because of "boom" prices. This makes the diversity of our communities vulnerable to outside influences.

Our schools are vulnerable to closing if Kitimat keeps going through booms and busts.

The quality of life here is vulnerable to boom industries, especially for people on fixed incomes.

Healthcare and health services are vulnerable. We don't know if we have the infrastructure to accommodate the influx of workers.

"Our food security is vulnerable if we see more development here in Kitimat."

Honouring the land is under great threat.

Air quality is the most vulnerable given existing proposals.

Access to the outdoors, which is currently blocked by industry.

Question 3

Do you know of a plan that exists in your community or region to manage the impacts upon some of the values we have identified? What are the consequences of a failure to manage such impacts?

Plans

- Land / Resource Management Plan
- Rio Tinto Alcan has 3 air control monitors

“There is a land / resource management plan, but it’s not taken very seriously by industry and it’s overall not very well known.”

All of the Kitimat waterfront is currently owned by Rio Tinto Alcan and the only access is one beach privately owned by Rio Tinto, but is publicly accessible.

There was a plan to encourage seniors to retire in Kitimat because the cost of living was low, but the increase in the cost of living here has made it impossible to implement that plan.

It seems like there is a plan to encourage new business, but it’s difficult to get details on what is actually in the works.

There is a lack of transparency from government. There might be some plans in place, but it’s difficult to get straight facts on planning, implementation, and monitoring.

There is no real plan to assess cumulative impacts.

What are the consequences of a lack of planning? We could end up making irreversible mistakes.

There are weekly community dinners and a homeless shelter.

“Unless we know the plan, we cannot know if it is sufficient or not.”

QUESTION 4

What practical steps do you think need to be taken in order to address the current shortcomings with regards to protecting vulnerable values? Examples: a regulatory regime accounting for overall air shed quality, a weekly forum to discuss community tensions and concerns that flow from provincial decisions, or an analysis of community water quality as it relates to health.

We need to set the standards for air and water quality control based on the best possible science available. We have to ensure these standards are properly reviewed to make sure we're using the most current science and information.

Up here in the north, we need to subsidize healthcare professionals to attract them to rural areas.

Industry must make long-term, financial commitments to the community before the project begins. For example, Kitimat residents should hear from Chevron's engineering firm at the outset, not as an afterthought when the company has already spent over \$1 billion developing the Kitimat LNG.

Companies need to seek community input before development begins.

We should actively create the community and systems we need for population stability. We need permanent jobs and social services so that people come here to stay.

"We must provide local government with more power to ensure community interests are served when industrial development increases."

Regulatory authorities need to collaborate more. Maybe local communities can help promote that.

We need more disclosure between those with opposing views on the industry in order to reach compromises and move forward together.

We should be supporting housing for vulnerable people.

"The city needs another trailer park NOW!"

QUESTION 5

What pace and scale of development is acceptable? Why? What pace and scale is unacceptable? Why?

“We should have a ‘benchmarking system’ in place. In order to ensure that the population increase immediately triggers an increase on social service funding to help protect communities and balance the boom and the bust.”

“Government and industry talk about consultation with local groups and First Nations, and then they act as though they’re doing us a favour. It feels like we don’t have the power to say no. When we express our voices, it feels like we aren’t heard.”

We shouldn’t begin with any city development until proponents are fully and financially committed. This contributes to speculation and risks a severe “bust.”

Projects shouldn’t move forward without community support.

An overall lack of knowledge and understanding is complicating the discussion about possible LNG development

“What the Kitimat airshed can handle would help define what is ‘acceptable’”

QUESTION 6

From the perspective of the values identified in Question 1, describe a plausible best-case future scenario within the next 10 years.

“As the science changes, then so too should environmental and regulatory standards change.”

Environmental standards are based on continuous improvement. Our wildlife and ecosystems are intact.

Communications between government and community are open and transparent. Everyone works together to resolve problems.

We have public marine access that isn’t owned by a corporation. We can still enjoy the outdoors.

We have at least one public DFO station and conservation officer here to monitor environmental compliance. Right now the closest is in Prince Rupert and those employees are already overstretched.

Improved medical services, shopping and social events.

We have good air quality and clean drinking water.

Kitimat finds the balance between industry that provides jobs and a strong tax base, but we maintain our lifestyle here. We identify our limits and can provide affordable house rentals.

There's a good selection of well-paying, long-term jobs making a living wage.

Attendees		
Name	Occupation	Community
Amos, Gerald	Haisla Elder; Friends of Wild Salmon, Chair	Kitimaat Village
Belmont, Rick	Unifor Local President	Kitimat
Brown, Cheryl	Retired Nurse; Member of Douglas Channel Watch	Kitimat
LaGace, Paul	Kitimat Houing Resource Project	Kitimat
Lahue, Geraldine	Kitimat Employment Centre	Kitimat
Maitland, Ken	Chairperson for the Kitimat First United Church and member of the Kitimat Valley Naturalists	Kitimat
McKenzie, Laura	Representative of the Kitimat Seniors' Society	Kitimat
McLeod, April	Chair of the Kitimat Valley Naturalists	Kitimat
McRae, Lucy	Life-time Kitimat Residents; Member of Douglas Channel Watch	Kitimat
McRae, Dave	Retired Rio Tinto Alcan Employee; Member of Douglas Channel Watch	Kitimat
Noble, Tyler	Economic Development Officer, District of Kitimat	Kitimat
Paul, Cecil	Haisla Elder	Kitimaat Village
Riddle, Jack	Retired RCMP Officer; Member of Douglas Channel Watch	Kitimat

APPENDIX 5: PRINCE RUPERT

Invitation & Public Session | Thursday, December 11, 2015 | 9am & 5:30pm

QUESTION 1

What do you love most about living in Prince Rupert? What are the values that matter most to you? Examples: salmon, caribou, wilderness, health, and economic well-being.

Healthy Environment & Healthy Food Systems

Access to a wide range of wild food sources, including: salmon, prawns, shrimp, gardens, wild plant foods, etc. The ability to pass down knowledge about food and being connected to food systems is very important.

Access to clean, pure drinking water.

Natural beauty, world-class nature.

A healthy airshed is very important to the health of our community members.

Access to the outdoors and wild spaces for health and recreation.

Safe, healthy and affordable housing for community members.

Equality is key to social harmony. Inequality creates divisions. Some people are benefiting from projects while others aren't.

"We have a great quality of life here. Our community is strong and cohesive. We have healthy people and renowned natural beauty."

QUESTION 2

Which values do you see as most resilient and which do you see as most vulnerable to the impacts of industrial development?

"When you go out hunting or fishing, you might bring something back to share with your neighbours. Workers coming home from the oil patch don't do that."

VULNERABLE VALUES

Community

Community well-being and cohesion is in jeopardy. Disagreements and fears of development can create harmful tensions.

Fears that large influxes of temporary workers will lead to and degradation of community from people who are not invested in the long-term health and well being of the community.

Safe and affordable housing is vulnerable to transient work populations.

There's lots of wildlife in this area. No one is speaking for the animals, they are moving around, don't know where to go. Someone has to speak for the wildlife.

QUESTION 3

Do you know of a plan that exists in your community or region to manage the impacts upon some of the values we have identified? What are the consequences of a failure to manage such impacts?

No data collected.

QUESTION 4

What practical steps do you think need to be taken in order to address the current shortcomings with regards to protecting vulnerable values? Examples: a regulatory regime accounting for overall air shed quality, a weekly forum to discuss community tensions and concerns that flow from provincial decisions, or an analysis of community water quality as it relates to health.

We need to have structures in place to foster constructive dialogue. We need to have the ability to resolve conflicts in a constructive way. There's some strong feelings about LNG in the community but there's no forums to work out our differences in a constructive way.

Clear and full information must be properly disseminated. Misinformation breeds mistrust.

The Northwest region needs to focus on comprehensive, community-based plans in order to protect our values and find a balance between development and building long-lasting, sustained communities.

"We need to ensure that our natural environment and human health are protected."

We should focus on cumulative effects baseline research- ecological, socio-ec conducted. Monitoring program in place. Development limits identified and thresholds enforced.

QUESTION 5

What pace and scale of development is acceptable? Why? What pace and scale is unacceptable? Why?

No data collected.

QUESTION 6

From the perspective of the values identified in Question 1, describe a plausible best-case future scenario within the next 10 years.

“Skeena River and anything close to the mouth of the Skeena are protected.”

We have control over economic development in our communities. People feel that the jobs they are working make a positive contribution. There’s a diversified economy so we aren’t just stuck in a boom and bust cycle.

Acknowledge that climate change is real and start taking real, meaningful action. Invest in clean energy for the future.

Unemployment rate goes down to 3% (currently at 15%) and annual income rates will rise.

Have one LNG terminal proceed. Any more than that would ruin the community.

We’ll have a sustainable economy built on the transition to renewable energy (wind, solar, etc.)

Tourism aimed at our wild nature and our sea; and commodities so diversified that we escaped the boom and bust cycle.

Fishing and forestry industries properly managed with local control. These industries are renewable. They attract families because they are sustainable over the long term.

We have local control over community resources. Community makes decisions together keeping in mind the needs of future generations.

ATTENDEES		
Name	Occupation	Community
Ambach, Mike	World Wildlife Fund	Prince Rupert
Amundand, Mark	First Nations Engagement, Spectra Energy	Terrace
Baker, Derek	Chamber of Commerce; Consultant, Petronas	Prince Rupert
Barthe, Grainne	North Coast Society	Prince Rupert
Bowering, Dr. David	Retired Chief Medical Officer	Terrace
Brooks, Wendy		Dodge Cove
Brown, Amanda		Prince Rupert
Brown, Carol		Dodge Cove
Campbell, Kevin	Reporter, Blackpress Media	Prince Rupert
Chi-Brown, Sarah		Dodge Cove
Carlick-Pearson, Judy		Prince Rupert / Metlakatla
Donald, Robert		Port Edward
Faggetter, Dr. Barb	Oceanographer, Ocean Ecology	Prince Rupert
Farrell, John	Community Futures; Chamber of Commerce	Prince Rupert
Gordon, Jenifer	Fisheries Department, Lax Kw'alaams	Prince Rupert
Hall, Kennard	Captain, Ocean Ecology	Prince Rupert
Harasym, Dolly		Dodge Cove
Justice, Charles	Representative, Prince Rupert Environmental Society	Prince Rupert
Latimer, John	GIS Technician, Lax Kw'alaams	Prince Rupert
Marsh, Ellen		Dodge Cove
Nelson, Clarence		Metlakatla
Nelson, Jennifer	Retired Business Owner	Port Edward
Nobels, Des	Regional District Director; T. Buck Suzuki	Dodge Cove

ATTENDEES		
Name	Occupation	Community
Patriquin, Brent		Prince Rupert
Proskiw, Rodney	Tour Operator	Prince Rupert
Pucci, Michael		Prince Rupert
Roth, Luanne	T. Buck Suzuki	Prince Rupert
Schindel, Gary		Prince Rupert
Slubowski, Anna		
Stephens, Alexie		Prince Rupert
Sullivan, Shelby		Prince Rupert
Wang, Happy		
Wilson, Ross	Director, Metlakatla Stewardship Society	
Young, Carol		Prince Rupert

APPENDIX 6A: TERRACE

Invitation Session | Monday, February 2nd, 2015 | 9am

QUESTION 1

What do you love most about living in Terrace? What are the values that matter most to you?

Examples: salmon, caribou, wilderness, health, and economic well-being.

Local and Wild Foods

In Terrace, we are able to access the “necessities of life” from the forest and river. “If you need it, you just go and get it” (examples: berries, mushrooms, fish)

Concern new influx of workers may overuse or harvest unsustainably. Traditionally harvesting is very important to local health and provides necessary sustenance.

Steelhead fishing contributes to our local recreation and economy and provides a food source for people living in Terrace.

“The land and waters are like our grocery store here.”

Community Cohesion/Strength

Community members in Terrace are caring and kind towards everyone, we are very accepting. We have diverse, multicultural communities.

We’re close knit, and the community is safe.

Three First Nations coexist with non-indigenous community in very small geographic area and tend to get-along.

Size of community allows you to see the impact of work you do and to feel job satisfaction as a result.

Feel like you live in the country but can drive 10 minutes to a convenience store. “I live on 10 acres of undeveloped forest, and it takes me 10 minutes to drive to a convenience store.”

Outdoor recreation is at the doorstep (example: ski hills)

We have good and reliable medical access. We are strong because we have small and medium-sized, locally owned businesses that contribute to our diverse economies.

We have healthy, permanent, “good” jobs here and affordable housing.

Our community members are engaged and empowered.

Clean Air & Water

Concerns that the pipeline and infrastructure will negatively impact salmon stocks.

Health concerns: People feel that the proximity to nature and fresh air contributes to the overall quality of life in this region.

Concern that Terrace will be unable to properly circulate toxins from potential LNG terminal. This could negatively impact their asthma, especially in children and the elderly.

An influx of people might overcrowd outdoor and recreational activities. Too many transients here could infringe on our ability to access the wilderness.

“Everywhere here is like a protected park. It’s so pristine.”

QUESTION 2

Which values do you see as most resilient and which do you see as most vulnerable to the impacts of industrial development?

RESILIENT VALUES

We have strong and cohesive communities. Communities are the most resilient value — when we face outside threats, we know how to pull together.

Strong sense of community spirit and culture.

We feel First Nations are resilient and the non-indigenous community is supportive of their fight to have their constitutional rights protected—sense that non-indigenous and indigenous interests are aligned.

“These values are interconnected and so it’s difficult to separate vulnerable and resilient values.”

VULNERABLE VALUES

Local and wild foods (specifically healthy salmon)

Awareness, understanding, and appreciation of traditional knowledge and rights.

Our self-sufficiency is threatened when we become influenced and reliant on outside industries for our economy and employment.

Large influx of “transients” will cause community to “lose connection to the land”

Concern that one of the pipelines is proposed above sensitive area for salmon breeding grounds.

Environmental Protection – Clean Air and Water*

“We need to think about where this gas is coming from. It’s coming from fracking and that is a big problem. We need to think about what is happening at the other end of these LNG projects”

Salmon are vulnerable.

Concern that cutbacks to government spending will result in lack of environmental protection/ lack of enforcement of law.

Concern that when you alter one part of an ecosystem, it affects the whole ecosystem.

Climate change could impact us here and leave many of our values vulnerable in many ways that we’re not currently anticipating.

Mistrust of government: concern that even where legislation exists to protect values, the government will choose to amend legislation to accommodate industry. Overall lack of funding, capacity, and time to properly review project proposals.

It’s difficult to trust the science and reports that industry is putting forward. They aren’t interested in the region’s long-term environmental protection or the safety or health of our communities.

Community Impacts

Loss of community integration and diversity due to “the cost of housing going up so much.”

Concern that rising housing costs will disproportionately impact lower income families by forcing them to move to a cheaper location.

Rate of development may “water down” the community values because of influx of transient workers

“Boom and bust cycles create control and dependency in our communities.”

QUESTION 3

Do you know of a plan that exists in your community or region to manage the impacts upon some of the values we have identified? What are the consequences of a failure to manage such impacts?

Plans

- Kalum and Kispiox Land and Resource Management Plans
- South Nass Sustainable Resource Management Plan
- Gitanyow Land Use Plan
- Housing Committee is developing a plan to increase beds at the transition house during extreme weather.

The province conducted a study to investigate impacts to air quality in Kitimat.

The Kitselas Band has been hiring experts to develop and implement a stewardship plan to protect the land and resources, specifically considering potential LNG development.

KLRMP & SRMP

Concerns with inadequate planning and safeguards

There is not overall plan considering the big picture and managing impacts in the long-term.

Projects are assessed one-by-one, without proper consideration for neighbouring projects, historical development, or other industries that could operate in the region

Prioritizing short-term financial goals over long-term sustainability. Federal and provincial governments will amend legislation and environmental protection to accommodate industry.

Concern that even if legislation exists to protect the clean air and water, it is insufficient since one of the pipeline proposals is to be built above a sensitive salmon bed; such decisions do not instill faith in the assessment process.

Concern that people trying to consult with resource developers lack that capacity to handle the many consultation requests, both from a First Nations' perspective and a non-First Nations' perspective.

“We need a community-owned process that makes decisions independent of government and industry. It can't be funded by industry — it has to be owned and controlled by the local community in order to reflect our values.”

Consequences of a failure to manage impacts from LNG industry

This creates an “us vs. them” mentality

A failure to manage will reduce access to our health services and strain existing programs.

Community members could be forced to leave Terrace because they can’t find affordable housing.

QUESTION 4

What practical steps do you think need to be taken in order to address the current shortcomings with regards to protecting vulnerable values? Examples: a regulatory regime accounting for overall air shed quality, a weekly forum to discuss community tensions and concerns that flow from provincial decisions, or an analysis of community water quality as it relates to health.

“We need a regional strategic environmental assessment.”

We need more regional stewardship because we are the ones who live here.

Here in Terrace, we would like to see some exceptions to the confidentiality clauses (i.e. clauses in the pipeline agreements being signed) would allow governments to speak openly about the process.

Upfront vetting process: Information sharing process between local government, including First Nations, that would allow involved parties to make informed decisions around development. This would provide community members with actual control over deciding whether a project would move forward (as opposed to the current situation where individuals feel decisions are made by the province with little regard for their community).

Centralized forum for discussion: local governments, industry proponents, and First Nations need a centralized forum to discuss concerns around project development as a group. This is also a concern since First Nations cannot make informed decisions about the process unless they have everyone’s opinion on the project.

Funding for capacity to review proposals would allow communities to be proactive, rather than reactive, to industry development. Local and provincial governments should sponsor a regional LNG planning committee. We need an LNG Advisory group that includes a broad spectrum of representatives from our community and across the region.

“We need an effective framework for meaningful community engagement and local input.”

Extended Timelines: extended environmental assessment submission timelines would allow community members to properly consult with community members, Elders, and concerned groups and to submit their concerns. Current timelines are too short for proper consultation.

Proponents should have to invest funds at the outset to subsidize the immediate needs placed on social services that come with a “boom” town (example: affordable housing).

We should have a proper assessment on the impacts of work camps near our communities and on the river.

“We need a limited–entry approach to development in the region because those of us living here have the knowledge needed to guide sustainable development.”

QUESTION 5

What pace and scale of development is acceptable? Why? What pace and scale is unacceptable? Why?

“The current proposed scale of development is too large. It exceeds the capacity of the area and we can’t manage it sustainably.”

Current pace unacceptable, local leadership and elected officials are overwhelmed with the number of projects to review.

Concerns that permit process is being streamlined/sped–up in order to accommodate industry need; such a pace prevents meaningful consultation.

Acceptable pace would provide capacity funding at the outset. This funding would allow community members to review and meaningfully control development. i.e. hire more staff to review the large influx of proposals. Practical suggestions: once province notices a “boom popping–up in a particular area,” they could transfer funds to that area to assist the affected community to engage meaningfully in the assessment process.

We need the Cole’s notes for each of the project proposals because people don’t have time to go through binders and binders of information.

We need more resources so that the Ministries can facilitate full and proper participation so that we can determine the right pace and scale.

“It’s hard for us to assess the right pace and scale of development when we don’t have the time or information we need. All of the information we have about projects so far is coming from government or industry. We need unbiased facts.”

QUESTION 6

From the perspective of the values identified in Question 1, describe a plausible best-case future scenario within the next 10 years.

“Decisions that impact the local community are made at the community-level, not by the province or the federal government.”

Our current values are maintained and protected. Food security is not a concern, and individuals are healthy.

Strong environmental monitoring and enforcement; avoid amending legislation under omnibus bills to eliminate environmental protections.

Local decision-making — communities have power to veto projects if they find they are not in the community’s long-term interest.

Nothing related to pipelines should move forward.

Small scale energy: energy that is locally sourced, for local use, that contribute to the local economy.

Apprenticeship Exchange: Since industry proponents promise training but fail to provide the requisite apprenticeship hours needed to become employable, proponents should create apprenticeship programs that send local trainees (in need of apprenticeship hours) to work on that particular proponent’s other projects to gain necessary hours.

Create a provincial fund to help locally trained people procure the requisite hours they need before they can be hired for a job (in resource development).

Develop a stable criteria for responsible development.

Apprenticeship funding: Process of provincial hiring and employing locally on a small scale. No more “boom and bust” jobs.

Adequate legislative protection for airshed and natural resources.

Being able to voice opinions/oppose projects in a central local forum. We need community forums for education and dialogue.

We’ll have diversified economies, and we’re not reliant on oil and gas.

ATTENDEES		
Name	Occupation	Community
Arguita, Noel	Community Liaison Officer	Kitselas
Baines, Amanda	Executive Director, Ksan House Society	Terrace
Bowering, David Dr.	Retired Chief Medical Officer of the Northwest	Terrace
Burton, Carla	Ethno-ecologist	Terrace
Burton, Phil	Regional Chair, UNBC	Terrace
Christiansen, Lynne	Councillor, City of Terrace	Terrace
Downie, Brian	Councillor, City of Terrace	Terrace
Gemeinhardt, Rina	Referrals Specialist, Kitselas	Terrace
Hart, Robert	Social Worker	Terrace
Hill, Bruce	Executive Director, Headwaters Initiative Project	Terrace
Hill, Julia	Operations Manager, SkeenaWild Conservation Trust	Terrace
Hill, Anne	North West Watch	Terrace
Jenson, Mikael	Student Union, Northwest Community College	Terrace
Kirkaldy, Kirsten	Manager, Ksan House Society	Terrace
Knox, Greg	Executive Director, SkeenaWild Conservation Trust	Terrace
Lehmann, Al	Retired teacher	Terrace
McGillivray, Elaine	Residence & Shelter, Ksan House Society	Terrace
Millen, Tania	Events Coordinator, SNCIRE	Terrace
Troy, Peters	Director, Steelhead Society	Terrace
Ross, Nancy	Director, North West Watch	Terrace
Squires, Pat	Community Liaison Officer, Kitselas Band Office	Terrace
Tyers, Stacey	Councillor, City of Terrace	Terrace
Wright, Lynn	Community Liaison Officer, Kitselas Band Office	Terrace

APPENDIX 6B: TERRACE

Public Session | Monday, February 2nd, 2015 | 6:30pm

QUESTION 1

What do you love most about living in Terrace? What are the values that matter most to you?

Examples: salmon, caribou, wilderness, health, and economic well-being.

Community and Health

We have a community of diverse and creative people so it's easy to "fit-in" here. Our community is welcoming and very inclusive—Terrace is family-oriented and safe.

There is a great selection of outdoor and recreational activities available and accessible to locals.

Our community shares a lot of the same values. There's an overall slower, relaxed life-style that leads to less anxiety and a great quality of life.

We have affordable housing—it's not too expensive to live here.

We have a good-sized population—we're not over-crowded. With a smaller community like ours, there's an opportunity for responsible growth. Our population is stable, and non-transient.

The air quality in Terrace has improved over the years and now is something that we enjoy and value about living here.

"We have a very cohesive community. We all know each other and that helps us to 'make things happen.'"

Local and Wild Foods

Nature provides an abundance of local and healthy foods available: wild salmon, wild mushrooms, moose, deer, and many more foods that we harvest and forage.

There's a healthy, abundant fish population. We fish and hunt a lot.

Clean Air, Water, and Forests

The clean and pristine Skeena River.

We are surrounded by pristine nature. There's an abundance of functional ecosystems.

We have untouched wilderness, and sites that are protected, like the sacred Seven Sisters.

“In Terrace, we have access to nature for privacy, for recreation, and we’re surrounded by beautiful scenery that contributes to our overall health and well-being.”

We need to preserve some of the natural environment and leave something for our grandchildren.

We have lots of clean water.

Economic Diversity

There is a wide range of economic opportunities. LNG development could be a part of that either directly or indirectly.

It’s important to balance economic opportunities, employment for First Nations people, and ensure that we’re creating sustainable development.

QUESTION 2

Which values do you see as most resilient and which do you see as most vulnerable to the impacts of industrial development?

RESILIENT VALUES

Community

Economic resiliency: Our community is able to adapt even in the wake of a global market collapse. People stayed here during the last recession and managed to get by with our diverse, local economy.

First Nations’ knowledge of the land is resilient.

“We have young, passionate families that are committed to raising their children here and protecting the region. People stand up for what they want here.”

VULNERABLE VALUES

Environment

Air quality in the region is extremely vulnerable, and that makes our community members’ health vulnerable. Our forests, rivers, salmon, and eco-systems are all very susceptible to industrial changes.

The fish, soil, migration routes, waterfowl...our environment and natural systems are incredibly vulnerable to changes that come with industry.

Community

“Our community is vulnerable to division and conflict as a result of boom and bust industries.”

Even though our community is a resilient value, it's also one of the most vulnerable.

Commercial, sport, and food fisheries that contribute to our local economy and food system is in jeopardy.

Our overall quality of life is vulnerable.

"I'm worried about the over-emphasis on jobs in the resource sector. We want to work, but not at any cost."

Infrastructure

How will we dispose of industrial chemicals removed during the liquefaction process? What about waste disposal, and sewage for new buildings?

The social service infrastructure is already overwhelmed; we are not equipped to handle another boom.

There is a lack of infrastructure to ensure we have continued access to affordable housing. It's difficult or impossible to maintain rent and housing prices in the wake of major changes to our communities.

QUESTION 3

Do you know of a plan that exists in your community or region to manage the impacts upon some of the values we have identified? What are the consequences of a failure to manage such impacts?

Plans

- Kalum Land and Resource Management Plan (KLRMP)
- *BC Parks Act*
- Protected Sites, such as the Seven Sisters
- City Housing plan
- Revenue Sharing Agreements with gas companies and the province
- Terrace 2050
- Waste Management Plan is going forward

"Even the *Parks Act* is no longer a guarantee. It's insufficient protection."

There is a lack of regional co-operation. We need a plan that is transparent and properly includes the community before things move forward. Government and industry need to ask for community input before decisions are made.

There has to be a thorough evaluation process for plans that are in place.

“Fort St. John has warned our City Council about the impacts of this boom. There are real and local consequences of development without proper planning.”

Concerns with Developing and Implementing Plans

Even with different protections and safeguards in place, there are too many different organizations developing plans that aren’t communicating with each other. Environmental organizations, municipalities, gas companies, and the province (and others) are developing plans with no consideration for what the other organizations are working on. Often there is no authority to implement the plants that community members have worked hard to contribute to.

We need to have different levels of government and our local elected leaders at the table hearing our concerns.

We are not prepared to manage the impacts of pipelines and marine traffic.

An influx of temporary people does not increase our tax base, but these temporary residents use our services, like our hospitals, without having to pay or contribute locally.

We need to have an in-depth look at what happens with LNG.

QUESTION 4

What practical steps do you think need to be taken in order to address the current shortcomings with regards to protecting vulnerable values? Examples: a regulatory regime accounting for overall air shed quality, a weekly forum to discuss community tensions and concerns that flow from provincial decisions, or an analysis of community water quality as it relates to health.

“We need to have discussions in a centralized forum that includes representation from all sides—everyone from First Nations, environmentalists, the social sector, politicians, business people, and corporations.”

We need publicly available information on the health consequences of this industrial development.

It would be great if our community could decide what kind of development we want in our region, rather than industry deciding they are going ahead with a project without considering local input.

We have to make sure the Skeena River is protected. What if a pipeline breaks—then what?

The region needs a unified alliance or coalition to protect the environment. This is what the province should be doing, but they're not.

"The province is making decisions that don't represent our best interests. We need a forum to discuss community tensions and concerns that result from that."

There has to be more scientific studies and monitoring—local residents need to have access to these studies to know what is happening in our region. One example of this: we should have full access to air quality studies in the Kitimat / Terrace airshed.

Locals need honest information. We're being told to 'prepare for business,' but the reality is, camp workers don't come into town to spend much money. Camp owners should be taxed a fee per worker for the use of our infrastructure and services, and they should have to pay that up-front.

We need solid regulations to maintain our clean air and we must have ongoing airshed monitoring in place.

"We need to have full recognition of industrial impacts on our health, and there needs to have laws that protect our health from industry."

Question 5

What pace and scale of development is acceptable? Why? What pace and scale is unacceptable? Why?

"The current pace of development and proposed development is unacceptable."

Our community lacks capacity to participate properly in assessment processes because there's an overall lack of staff and resources.

We need funding "up-front" to make sure employees and communities can properly review all of the projects that are proposed.

The pace is fast and our local and provincial economies are not the ones benefiting from proposed LNG development.

Development should all be value-added and ensure the long-term supply of any resource industry.

"We should be using locally available and trained workers for any development."

Question 6

From the perspective of the values identified in Question 1, describe a plausible best-case future scenario within the next 10 years.

“Ten years from now, I would like to see a local, sustainable economy.”

We have a community of young people that are engaged and heard.

No LNG or oil pipelines in our region.

The education system is broad and not merely confined to training youth in resource development.

We have thoughtful, sustainable growth, not just growth for growth’s sake.

Companies need to come with one or two projects, not 17 all at once.

We have subsidized clean energy, such as geo-thermal, wind, wave, and solar.

Communities have infrastructure in place before development begins.

“We ensure that, once environmental protections are in place, the government can’t alter legislation when it wants to install a pipeline.”

ATTENDEES		
Name	Occupation	Community
Artis, Sarah		Terrace
Baldwin, Morgen		Terrace
Brown, Christie		Terrace
Brown, Marj		Terrace
Crech, Malcolm		Terrace
Culp, Jim		Terrace
Dale, Mary		Cedarvale
Dale, Lyle		Cedarvale
DelaRonde, Pat		Terrace

ATTENDEES		
Name	Occupation	Community
DelaRonde, Bill		Terrace
Denis, Sheldon		Terrace
Disney, Sheri		Terrace
Hanna, Paul		Terrace
Hoekstra, Robert		Terrace
Holland, Caylin		Terrace
Jensen, Joan		Terrace
Loggin, Sasa		Terrace
Lue, Mui		Terrace
Mark, Brenda		Terrace
McFatyre, Allan		Terrace
McNaughton, Tif		Terrace
Praught, Lucy		Terrace
Sissons, Brenda		Terrace
Tarwick, Daisy		Terrace
Traseake, Jane		Terrace
Walker, Terry		Terrace
Watts, Brigitte		Terrace
Wesley, Brenda		Terrace
Wooton, Maureen		Terrace
Wooton, Allen Jr.		Terrace
Wooton, Allen Sr.		Terrace

LINDSAY STAPLES, REPORT LEAD AUTHOR



West Coast Environmental Law is a non-profit group of environmental strategists and analysts dedicated to safeguarding the environment through law. We believe in a just and sustainable society where people are empowered to protect the environment and where environmental protection is law. For over 40 years we have played a role in shaping BC and Canada's most significant environmental laws, and have provided legal support to citizens, First Nations, and communities on practically every environmental issue imaginable.



The Northwest Institute for Bioregional Research has been working towards social and ecological sustainability in Northwest British Columbia since 1996. NWI seeks to promote cooperation within and among communities in the region, including First Nations and others interested in resource uses that protect biological diversity and support sustainable communities.

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