

First Nations Say They Will Not Allow Pipelines and Oil Tankers Carrying Alberta's Tar Sands Oil in British Columbia

"This is where Enbridge hits a wall"

VANCOUVER (March 23, 2010) –First Nations stood as a unified block today – on the 21st anniversary of the Exxon Valdez oil spill – to announce their opposition to a proposed Tar Sands pipeline that would bring expanded amounts of Tar Sands oil from Alberta to British Columbia, where the oil would be shipped by oil tankers to overseas markets, notably China.

"We will protect ourselves and the interests of future generations with everything we have because one major oil spill on the coast of British Columbia would wipe us out," said Gerald Amos, Director, Coastal First Nations, an alliance of nine First Nations. "This bountiful and globally significant coastline cannot bear an oil spill. This is where Enbridge hits a wall."

Coastal First Nations from Vancouver Island to the BC/Alaska border are unanimous in their opposition and are joined by the vast majority of First Nations affected along the pipeline route from Kitimaat to Alberta. These First Nations – whose territories are all directly impacted by the proposed Enbridge Northern Gateway Pipeline – stood in unity today to voice their opposition. The Coastal First Nations issued a declaration from their First Nations governments:

...in upholding our ancestral laws, rights and responsibilities, we declare that oil tankers carrying crude oil from the Alberta Tar Sands will not be allowed to transit our lands and waters.

The Athabasca Chipewyan Cree First Nation located near Alberta's Tar Sands also offered their support with Chief Allan Adam saying, "From experience I know that any industrial development and potential pollution within traditional territories of the First Nations not only jeopardizes the land, the people and wildlife today, but for generations to come... I do not support doing business with Enbridge now and in the future."

To date no First Nation in Canada – and no municipality – has publicly supported Enbridge's proposed pipeline, which would increase Tar Sands oil production by 30 per cent. Tar Sands oil produces three times more greenhouse gas emissions than conventional oil.

"Nothing threatens our way of life more than contaminated water and destruction of wildlife. Today, we invite First Nations around the world to join us in solidarity in our fight against this pipeline development and to a put a stop to oil tanker traffic," said Terry Tegee, Vice President, Carrier Sekani Tribal Council.

Also today, an unprecedented grouping of 150 First Nations groups, businesses, environmental organizations, and prominent Canadians – including Dr. David Suzuki, Margaret Atwood and Neve Campbell – ran a full-page ad in today's *Globe and Mail* with the headline '*This was Exxon's gift to Alaska. B.C. Can Expect the same from Enbridge.*'

-30-

Contact:

Art Sterritt, Executive Director, Coastal First Nations: 604-868-9110 or 604-696-9889

Gerald Amos, Director, Coastal First Nations: 250-632-1521 or 604-696-9889

Terry Tegee, Vice President, Carrier Sekani Tribal Council: 250-640-3256