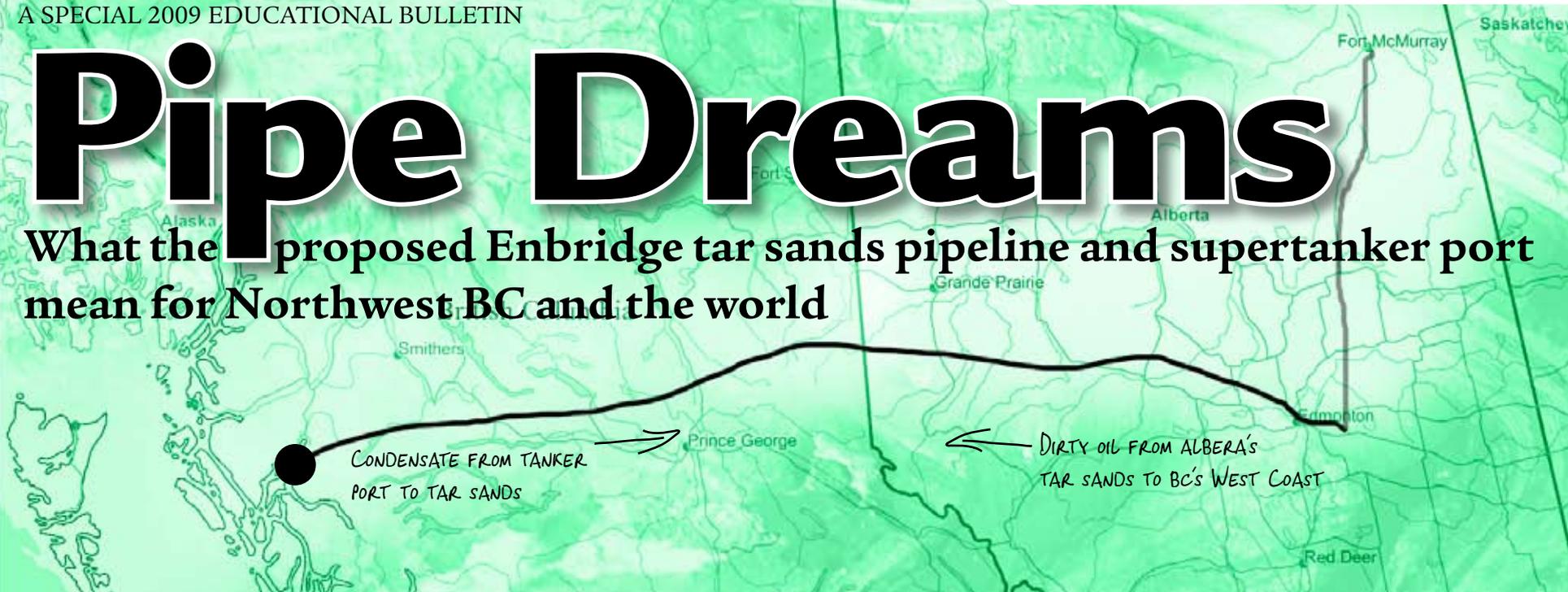




A SPECIAL 2009 EDUCATIONAL BULLETIN

Pipe Dreams

What the proposed Enbridge tar sands pipeline and supertanker port mean for Northwest BC and the world



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The Question: Should pipelines be part of Northwest BC's future?

North America is on the brink of a major shift in the way we obtain energy to fuel our economy. Today's generations have an extraordinary opportunity to generate renewable energy and reduce energy demands. Along the way we can stimulate the economy and create millions of jobs.

So how does a major pipeline project, designed to carry oil from Alberta's tar sands to a tanker port on BC's west coast, fit with our new energy vision?

The Enbridge Northern Gateway project involves two 1,170-kilometre pipelines, stretching from near Edmonton to Kitimat. If built, the

Construction jobs Enbridge promises are not expected until 2012 at the earliest. Enbridge estimates 45 long-term jobs¹ – that's fewer than the number employed at the average Safeway.²

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westbound and eastbound pipelines could carry 525,000 barrels of oil and 193,000 barrels of condensate (a petroleum product used to thin tar sands bitumen) per day, respectively.

Making this project a reality means an end to a long-standing moratorium on tanker traffic on BC's north coast. Supertankers loaded up with tar sands oil would ply the waters of Douglas Channel, past Gil Island where B.C. Ferries' Queen of the North sank in 2006, into the pristine Caamano Sound, and on to refineries in Asia and potentially the U.S. West Coast.

As we commemorate the twentieth anniversary of the Exxon Valdez oil spill, we must take a hard look at the Enbridge proposal. Do we want oil supertankers in our fragile coastal waters? Do we want pipelines cutting across our salmon watersheds? And do we want to aid the expansion of the Alberta tar sands?

A growing number of Northwest BC residents believe the risks from the pipelines and tankers are too great. We believe there is a better way forward, for the Northwest and the world.



Death by a thousand spills

Spills from pipelines are more frequent than tanker spills and can go unnoticed for days



When people think of oil spills, they see an image of a supertanker gushing crude from a gash in its hull. What many people don't know is that pipelines themselves are a source of many oil spills. Added together, these spills present a major environmental threat.

The Enbridge pipelines will cross over 1,000 streams and rivers, more than 800 of them in BC's Skeena and upper Fraser watersheds. The pipelines will cross mountain ranges and earthquake and avalanche-prone landscapes before

hitting the fragile ecosystems of the west coast.

Enbridge recorded 67 spills from pipelines in 2006 and 65 spills in 2007.³ Even with best practices, spills can and do happen.

The Northern Gateway Project is unique because it involves two pipelines. If both pipelines were to rupture at a stream crossing, both oil and condensate would be spilled. We know little about what the combined effect of these two pollutants would be.

We know that condensate is lethal to a range of marine life. The impacts of a bitumen spill on freshwater ecosystems are less known, although they would likely be as significant as a crude oil spill.

Although technology is helping reduce pipeline failures, the rapid expansion of pipelines across western Canada means we can still expect spill frequency to increase. In 2007 alone, Alberta's Energy Resources Conservation Board recorded 823 ruptures.⁴

The Pipeline Corridor: A thousand-kilometre-long clearcut

The pipeline corridor requires a 30-metre-wide right of way. At 1,170 kilometres, the total area cleared for the pipeline would be equivalent to 6,557 football fields.

Clearing the corridor for a pipeline causes a direct loss of wildlife habitat, and also fragments the landscape, disturbing

interactions between predators and prey. This could have significant impacts on a variety of animals, such as mountain caribou, mountain goats, grizzly bear, and deer. This impact is especially harmful to species that depend on old forests, including commercially important furbearers such as lynx, marten, and fisher.⁵

There is evidence that wolves and other predators hunt on rights-of-way because these open areas attract ungulates and small mammals.

Roads built to access the pipeline are likely to lead to increased hunting and poaching.



A Lesson from the Exxon Valdez and Q

Allowing supertankers in BC's coastal waters presents an unavoidable risk of oil spills. As Alaska's Exxon Valdez demonstrated, such spills are devastating to marine life, coastal fisheries, tourism, and everyone who depends on the marine ecosystem for their livelihoods.

Should the Enbridge pipelines proceed, approximately 225 tankers would travel our inside coastal waters every year.



Between 1992 and 2007, some 841,000 tonnes of oil were spilled.⁶ That's roughly equivalent to 23 Exxon Valdez oil spills.

Supertankers can hold up to 320,000 dead weight tonnes and can be up to 350 meters long and 60 meters wide. The deck of one of these tankers is larger than 13 NHL hockey rinks.

Enbridge has promised to use the best available tanker technology. However, as the sinking of the Queen of the North showed, even with the best technology accidents occur.

When the 125-metre Queen of the North ferry sank after hitting Gil Island in March 2006, it was carrying more than 240,000 litres of fuel and oil.



Oil spills are hard to clean up with a mere 15% being considered a 'successful' recovery.

By comparison, a tanker traveling along the same route would be carrying about 318 million litres. And while double-hulled tankers do reduce risk, Environment Canada recognizes that "they will not eliminate spillage under all circumstances."⁷

How many spills will there be? When assessing oil spill risk based on 2005 tanker traffic, Environment Canada predicted 100 small spills, 10 moderate spills and one major spill every year.⁸ By requiring the lifting of the 37-year-old moratorium, the Enbridge project would result in increased tanker traffic, and an increased risk of spills. Even one major spill could cause irreparable harm to our coastal economy.

The North Coast is home to numerous salmon and Gray whale migratory routes, and feeding habitat for Humpback whales and Orcas. Impacts from the Exxon Valdez oil spill further up the coast included the killing of an estimated 22 orcas, 250,000 sea birds, 2,800 sea otters, 1.9 million salmon and 12.9 billion herring.



"These are short-term capital interests which are overriding rational decision-making," Haida Nation President Guujaw said. "The shareholders are willing to advance the bottom line, but we have to deal with the risk it brings to the environment and live with it."

Pipeline impacts on salmon and steelhead

Northwest residents know the Skeena River boasts one of the world's healthiest salmon runs. Skeena wild salmon contribute an estimated \$110 million to the region's annual economy.⁹ The proposed Enbridge pipelines put this ecologically and economically invaluable resource at risk.

Building pipelines causes erosion, which adds sediment to fragile fish habitat and has been shown to harm fish even at low levels. Studies on the effects of pipeline water crossings, carried out over 25 years, showed serious impacts on fish abundance and the number and diversity of invertebrates.¹⁰ Pipelines also cause a loss of habitat along streams and rivers, which in turn

causes warmer in-stream water temperatures.

The Carrier Sekani Tribal Council, representing eight bands west of Prince George, commissioned an assessment of the Enbridge pipeline route in 2006. One of their main concerns is the possibility of a spill in a river like the Stuart, a BC heritage river that flows into the Nechako and boasts one of the highest quality sockeye runs in the world.

Other rivers, such as the Morice, are culturally important salmon rivers that have seen declining sockeye returns. Even a minor spill in these fragile river systems could be devastating for both the salmon and those who rely on them.

THE PEMBINA PIPELINE OIL SPILL

In 2000, the Pembina Pipeline spilled over one million litres of light crude into the Pine River 100 kilometres from the community of Chetwynd. It killed birds, fish and animals, and polluted the Town's drinking water supply.¹¹ During oil spills, heavy crude sinks to river bottoms while some oil floats on the surface.

"I believe we won't be fishing for a long time in the river. I walked down last night and probably 200, 300 dead fish along the shores and in the river."

- Donna Vipond, who lives near the site of the Pembina Pipeline spill

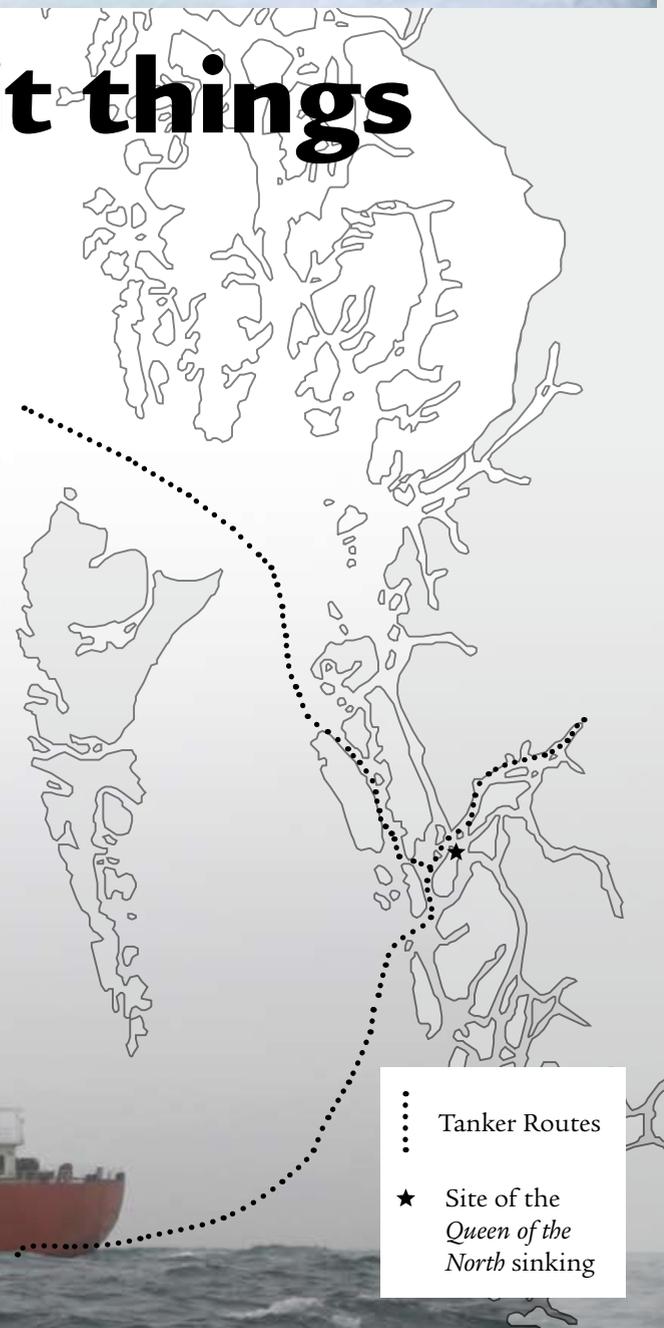


About 25,000 people, one-third of them First Nations, are employed in commercial fishing up and down our coast. BC's fish and seafood production is worth around \$1 billion a year.¹²

Queen of the North: Ships hit things

Other impacts on marine life from tanker traffic include noise pollution, ballast discharges and oil spills during loading and discharging. Enbridge tankers and the proposed accompanying tugs would produce substantial underwater noise, which may disrupt the sensitive communication systems that whales and dolphins use to navigate and find food.

British Columbia's rugged coast is one of the world's most awe-inspiring landscapes. Each year thousands of people from around the world travel here to witness its beauty. An oil spill on our coast would be an unimaginable tragedy.



“What we know is that oil sands creates a big carbon footprint.

-BARACK OBAMA, PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES



Alberta's Tar Sands: The dirtiest oil on earth

We can't weigh the costs and benefits of a pipeline without considering the stuff it carries.

And the Enbridge pipeline would carry the dirtiest oil on earth, from Alberta's tar sands.

The tar sands are a deposit of oil mixed with sand (called bitumen). It's thought we can extract roughly 174 billion barrels with today's technology. Some of the bitumen is mined in open pits, while the rest, found in deeper deposits, is extracted using a steam process (in situ).

Separating bitumen from sand uses large amounts of energy. In fact, tar sands oil production is Canada's fastest growing source of greenhouse-gas emissions. This doesn't include the emissions from burning the oil.

Canada currently produces 1.4 million barrels of tar sands oil per day.¹³ Enbridge anticipates its pipeline will carry more than half a million barrels of oil per day, so it will play a significant role in future tar sands expansion.

Tar sands facts

- Getting a barrel of oil means removing 4 tonnes of soil, rock and bitumen.
- Each barrel of oil requires 2 – 5 barrels of fresh water. Companies have permits for 349 million m3 Athabasca River water every year.
- Tar sands tailing now cover 130 km2. The industry produces 1.8 billion litres of tailings daily.
- Producing tar sands oil creates 3 – 5 times more global warming pollution than conventional oil.¹⁴
- Downstream First Nations are experiencing elevated cancer rates, which they fear is linked to tar sands development.

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Tar sands photo: Pembina Institute, Salmon: Keith Douglas, Rally sign: Greg Brown

Assessing the pipeline

Residents deserve more than a rubber stamp

The Enbridge Gateway Pipeline project is regulated by Canada's National Energy Board and subject to joint environmental assessment under Canada's Environmental Assessment Agency.

Under current regulations, projects can be approved even if they have significant environmental and socio-economic impacts.¹⁵

Since forming in 1959, the National Energy Board has approved every project except one (Sumas II, a power line from a Washington gas-fired power plant to BC).

The National Energy Board is supposed to consider the public interest when assessing pipelines. But almost always it focuses on reducing impacts of proposed projects, ignoring the question of whether the projects should proceed at all.

The Enbridge proposal raises important questions: what is Canada's energy strategy? How does this proposal fit within that strategy and the urgent need to address climate change?

While the National Energy Board process has been around for 50 years, it has yet to be in step with today's values. From climate change to First Nations case law, it does not adequately address today's needs. We need a process that is more accountable to residents and First Nations across the region.

The National Energy Board process needs to be re-tooled for the twenty-first century.

At a minimum, we need to ensure any process asks:

- Should the project proceed, not how it should be done
- What are the cumulative impacts of the pipeline, from climate change impacts from tar sands expansion, to tankers off BC's coast.
- Are Aboriginal Rights and Title being properly respected?

The Need for Public Inquiry: Looking at the West Coast Oilport

Enbridge isn't the first company to think of ways to get Alberta oil to the West Coast.

Three decades ago there was a similar proposal for an oil port at Kitimat and a pipeline to Alberta. Government initiated the West Coast Oilport Enquiry under Dr. Andrew Thompson. Government terminated the inquiry in 1978 after Thompson found few sound reasons for building the pipeline considering the substantial threats it presented.

The structure of the Thompson inquiry is seen as a good model for assessing a project such as Enbridge's tar sands pipelines. This is because it asked whether the infrastructure should be built at all, not simply how it should be built.

Friends of Wild Salmon is calling for a Public Inquiry on the Enbridge project.



Take Action Today!

Enbridge has applied to begin the environmental assessment process. Public comment on the process or draft terms of reference is open until April 14, 2009.

Submit written comments to:

Mr. Brett Maracle, Panel Manager
Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency
160 Elgin Street, 22nd Floor, Ottawa, ON K1A 0H3
Tel.: 1-866-582-1884 / Fax: 613-957-0941
E-mail: gateway.review@ceaa-acee.gc.ca

You can also:

Visit friendsofwildsalmon.ca and send an instant e-mail to Prime Minister Stephen Harper calling for a public inquiry.

And tell your friends!