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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Public review on federal environmental assessment wraps up in BC

EA review shows Canadians want more robust, fairer decision-making processes

VANCOUVER, BC, Coast Salish Territories – An Expert Panel appointed by Minister of Environment and Climate Change Catherine McKenna to review Canada’s environmental assessment (EA) processes is in Vancouver this week, seeking input from the public and Indigenous peoples about how best to reform federal processes for making decisions that affect the environment.

The Panel is wrapping up a cross-Canada public engagement tour, hosting sessions in Vancouver on Monday and Tuesday and then in Nanaimo on Wednesday and Thursday. The Panel is expected to make recommendations to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change by March 31, 2017.

“Right now we have a once-in-a-generation opportunity to enact a law that works for the environment and communities,” said Anna Johnston, Staff Counsel at West Coast Environmental Law and an expert in environmental assessment who will be presenting to the Panel today. “The recent Kinder Morgan pipeline decision illustrates the urgent need for a more democratic, accountable process for hearing Canadians’ concerns and protecting the things we care about – like our oceans, rivers and climate.”

Johnston, who also sits on a Multi-Interest Advisory Committee (MIAC) established by the government to assist the Panel in its review, will be presenting on leading-edge EA processes. Her submissions will be based on the outcomes of the Environmental Assessment Reform Summit, hosted by West Coast, which earlier this year brought over 30 of Canada’s leading environmental assessment experts, academics, lawyers and practitioners together to discuss solutions for how to fix Canada’s broken EA regime.

The experts participating in the Summit contributed to “12 pillars of next-generation environmental assessment,” which include key reforms like meaningful public participation, co-governance with Indigenous nations and a climate test to ensure Canada meets its international climate obligations.

“Over the last few months, Canadians and experts from coast to coast have spoken up in support of fairer, science-based decision-making on matters affecting the environment. We’re hopeful that the Panel will consider those voices and make strong recommendations to strengthen environmental assessment in Canada,” Johnston said.

After this week’s final in-person sessions, members of the public will have until December 23rd to submit comments to the Expert Panel.

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Additional resources:

[Environmental Assessment Reform Summit Proceedings - Executive Summary](#)

[Environmental Assessment Reform Summit Proceedings - Complete Proceedings](#)