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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Budget Bill Declares War on Environment

Removal of environmental safeguards serves interests of big oil and silences citizens, say environmental lawyers

VANCOUVER, BRITISH COLUMBIA (April 27, 2012) – Bill C-38, introduced in Parliament yesterday guts Canada’s long-standing environmental laws and puts Canadians health, safety, and environment at risk to serve the financial interests of big oil and mining companies. The bill was released to the public on-line only late last night.

“By gutting Canada’s long-standing environmental laws, the budget bill gives big oil and gas companies what they’ve been asking for – fewer environmental safeguards so they can push through resource megaprojects with little regard to environmental damage.” says Jessica Clogg, Executive Director and Senior Counsel at West Coast Environmental Law. “It is Canadians and our children who will pay the cost.”

Environmental law rollbacks in the budget bill are even deeper than the federal government had previously signalled. The assault on Canada’s environment runs to well over 100 pages of the 431-page budget implementation act (Bill C-38) and effectively dismantles Canada’s environmental laws as we know them, including:

- Near elimination of fish habitat protection in the *Fisheries Act*, putting species from coast to coast to coast at increased risk of habitat loss and population decline
- Wholesale repeal of the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act* and its replacement with a new law that allows the federal government to avoid environmental reviews of many potentially harmful projects, and to do less comprehensive reviews where they still occur
- Exclusion of concerned groups and citizens from the environmental review process for pipelines like the controversial Enbridge tankers and pipelines project

“The budget bill involves serious changes with big consequences and future ramifications for human health, secure long term jobs, and the environment,” noted Clogg.

Charities, including environmental groups also came in the crosshairs of the budget bill, and will now face severe penalties for exceeding limits on political activities.

“This unprecedented attack on Canada’s environmental laws and environmental groups appears calculated to silence environmental voice and push through controversial resource projects like the Enbridge tankers and pipelines project,” stated Clogg. “It will not succeed.”

“Canadians understand that with something as important as the environment, all sides need to be fairly heard.”

For more information:

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Backgrounder: **“Myths & Realities: the 2012 federal budget and environmental laws”**

Background information, blogs and more at: **www.envirolawsmatter.ca**