



Healthy Oceans. Healthy Communities.



FOREST ETHICS



Keeping our oceans oil-spill free: BC groups applaud federal NDP's leadership on tanker ban bill

Official Opposition's first policy announcement is a bid to protect Pacific coast from oil tankers spills

June 8, 2011 (Vancouver, BC) - On World Oceans Day, groups working to protect B.C.'s coast from oil spills are congratulating the federal NDP for choosing to make their first substantive policy proposal as Canada's Official Opposition a private member's bill to ban oil supertankers from Canada's Pacific North Coast.

"This is a compelling demonstration of the NDP's commitment to represent the 79% of British Columbians who want to keep oil tankers off BC's north coast," says Nikki Skuce of Forest Ethics. "We congratulate Fin Donnelly, Nathan Cullen and the NDP for their ongoing leadership on this issue. It is in Canada's national interest to keep our oceans oil-spill free."

The Federal NDP, Liberals and Bloc Québécois all supported a motion last year for a tanker ban for this region that includes the Great Bear Rainforest. The Green Party has also stated its support. The Conservative Party has clearly stated opposition to an oil tanker ban in public statements and in Parliament.

"Even with a majority, the Conservatives are faced with serious consequences if they throw too much weight behind these oil pipeline and tanker proposals," says Eric Swanson of Dogwood Initiative. "Electoral consequences are a ways off, but the wrong stance from the Conservatives could precipitate a conflict with Canada's First Nations that they're not prepared for."

"Over 80 First Nations have declared their united opposition to oil pipeline and supertanker proposals from Alberta to B.C.'s coast. A Supreme Court challenge is highly likely if projects like Enbridge's Northern Gateway continue to be pushed against First Nations' consent, and a prolonged conflict could sour relations on resource issues generally," says Josh Paterson of West Coast Environmental Law Association.

Many residents and First Nations in British Columbia have vowed to do what it takes to stop Enbridge's Northern Gateway pipeline from being built.

"The bottom line is that our North Coast is too important, too valuable to risk by introducing oil supertanker traffic," says Jennifer Lash of Living Oceans Society. "It's heartening to see such a strong stance from the federal NDP on World Oceans Day to keep our coast working, for marine life and for people."

Contacts (commentaires aussi disponibles en français):

Nikki Skuce – Senior Energy Campaigner, Forest Ethics (210-778-0117) *(français)*

Eric Swanson – No Tankers Director, Dogwood Initiative (250-858-9990)

Josh Paterson – Staff Lawyer, West Coast Environmental Law Association (604-601-2512) *(français)*

Jennifer Lash – Executive Director, Living Oceans Society (250-973-6580)