

Myth:

Weakening environmental reviews for major projects will increase certainty for project investors.

Environmental reviews can be handed over to the provinces because “one project, one review” is all Canada needs.

Proper environmental review of projects hurts the economy, so strict time limits are needed to push projects through more quickly.

Proposed legal changes “modernize” the regulatory process.

Changes to Canada’s environmental laws need to be put in a large budget bill because we need to get on with fast-tracking resource projects and exporting our resources as soon as possible.

Reality:

- Proposed changes are a recipe for conflict, litigation, and a patchwork of conflicting provincial measures that will result in uncertainty and unpredictable delay for projects.

- Canadians depend on the federal government to safeguard our families and nature from pollution, toxic contamination and other environmental problems.
- Eliminating or limiting federal environmental reviews means eliminating the environmental safety net for things like fish and fish habitat, which are the federal government’s legal responsibility.
- Provincial environmental assessment processes are inconsistent from each other and often weak, lacking key safeguards of the federal process.
- Mechanisms already exist for joint federal/provincial review of projects.

- History has taught us that rushed and superficial public review of megaprojects risks leaving taxpayers on the hook for multi-billion dollar clean-up costs when things go wrong later.
- Canada needs a measured and thoughtful approach that ensures that we approve projects that make the greatest contribution to a sustainable economy and put them in the right place, not a ‘rubber stamp’ for development at all costs.
- Proposed changes increase the likelihood projects will be challenged in our already over-burdened court system resulting in delay and uncertainty for industry.

- Dismantling Canada’s environmental laws, if done as planned, turns back the clock several decades.
- Canadians have spent 30 years working to build up our environmental laws so that the disasters of our past – the Sydney Tar Ponds, the death of Lake Erie, the Bennett Dam flooding – are not repeated. We are still paying for these disasters with compromised health and with taxpayer dollars.

- These proposed changes are important, and thus they should *not* be included in a budget announcement or omnibus legislation.
- Packaging substantive changes to laws in a budget is reminiscent of anti-democratic American-style political tactics used to limit debate on important subjects.
- Canadians and our elected representatives deserve the opportunity to properly understand and debate what the government is proposing to do, and consultation with First Nations should occur if legal changes are to be made.