



Together, we can keep BC's ecosystems free from oil spills

The Enbridge Northern Gateway Oil Supertanker and Pipeline Project: So much that's precious . . . too much to risk

The Canadian government is presently considering approval of a 1,172 km pipeline that would carry 525,000 barrels per day of crude oil from the Alberta tar sands to the BC coast and load it onto supertankers bound for China and the west coast of the US. Enbridge's oil tanker and pipeline plan is all about exporting massive quantities of Canadian oil just so tar sands oil companies can get a better price than they already get for their crude in Canada.

The Enbridge project will threaten the coast of BC and the Great Bear Rainforest with hundreds of oil supertankers a year and the threat of an oil spill catastrophe. More than 1,000 rivers and streams — including two of the world's most important salmon rivers, the Fraser and the Skeena — will also be at risk from pipeline oil spills. And it will allow a 30% increase in tar sands production — already Canada's fastest-growing source of greenhouse gas emissions and a massive source of water pollution and forest degradation. The Enbridge project puts so much at risk — jobs, families, rivers, coastlines, and communities — just to allow oil companies to earn a few extra dollars per barrel of oil and for a very few extra permanent jobs in BC.

Enbridge: Opening the Door to an Exxon Valdez Disaster in BC

Enbridge plans to bring 225 massive oil supertankers each year through the highly dangerous waters of our north coast, along the narrow Inside Passage, and into Kitimat. Each of these tankers is nearly as long as the Empire State Building. These are the same waters in which the Queen of the North tragically crashed and sank. Enbridge has said it can't guarantee there will be no spill, and Enbridge will not be financially liable if there is a tanker oil spill. Despite technical precautions, human error can never be eliminated, and accidents happen. Many of these massive supertankers carry 8 times as much oil as was spilled by the Exxon Valdez in Alaska — and 23 years later, there are beaches in Alaska that are still filled with oil. Once oil hits the coast, it is impossible to fully clean up. Many species have yet to recover from the Exxon disaster.

A large oil spill would destroy communities and tens of thousands of jobs in established industries such as fishing, tourism, and guide outfitting that depend on an oil-free coast. It would also destroy the cultures, livelihoods and food supplies of many First Nations who continue to live off what the sea provides. The coast that so many British Columbians rely upon for their sustenance and their recreation would be damaged for generations, and changed forever.

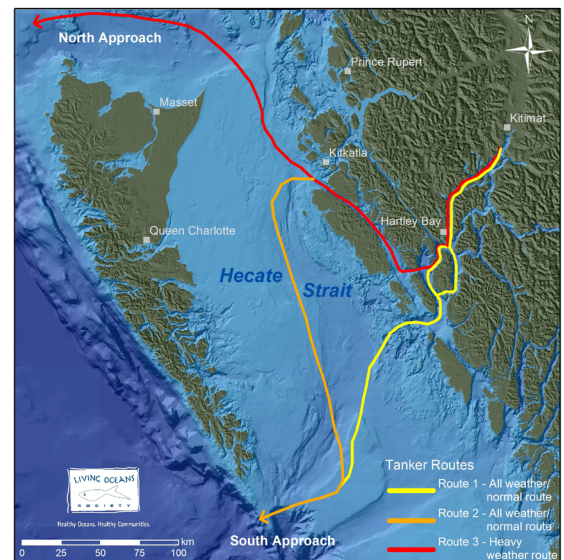


Image courtesy of Living Oceans Society.



A condensate tanker approaches the coastal community of Hartley Bay, Gitga'at Territory.

Rivers at risk from pipeline oil spills

An oil spill into salmon rivers could devastate spawning fish and seep into groundwater, destroying key resources for First Nations whose families depend on fish for their food and culture, and ruining this shared resource for other British Columbians. Once an oil spill hits a fast-moving river, it is impossible to fully contain or to clean up. Enbridge averages between 60 and 80 spills each year (see Enbridge Corporate Social Responsibility Reports), and in 2010 Enbridge had its worst spill disaster, dumping over 3 million litres of oil into the Kalamazoo River in Michigan. As of January 2012, it is still not fully cleaned up. Enbridge's pipeline in northern BC would expose some of the most important salmon rivers in BC to this risk.

The Enbridge Pipeline is contrary to Indigenous Law

First Nations have used their own laws to decide that the Enbridge tankers and pipeline project is prohibited in their lands. The Coastal First Nations declared in 2010 that crude oil supertankers are banned from the entire north coast. Sixty-six First Nations have signed the Save the Fraser Declaration, which states that Enbridge's oil pipeline is banned in their territories in the Fraser River watershed, and that oil tankers are not permitted in the ocean migration routes of Fraser River salmon on both the north and the south coasts. The decisions of First Nations expressed in the Save the Fraser Declaration, and the Coastal First Nations Declaration, are an exercise of their constitutionally-protected Aboriginal Title over their lands and waters. These Declarations are also supported by International Law and agreements that Canada must respect. If the Enbridge tankers and pipeline project is approved by the federal government, it is practically guaranteed that one or more First Nations will challenge that decision in Canada's courts, as that decision would be in violation of their laws. The federal government refused many First Nations' demands to negotiate a shared decision-making process that would give First Nations a seat at the table to decide on the Enbridge project, instead insisting that the Calgary-based National Energy Board would conduct hearings and make the decision.

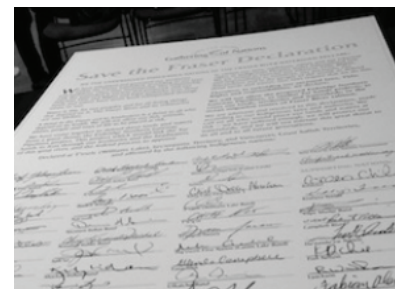
Tens of thousands of British Columbians are standing behind First Nations, supporting them in their decision to use their own laws to stop this pipeline and tanker project.

Every British Columbian stands to be affected by dirty oil

Tar sands crude oil is far more carbon intensive than conventional oil, generating three to five times more greenhouse gases than conventional oil extraction methods and contributing to climate change. Strip mining and underground mining have destroyed water and forests on Indigenous lands, and threatens the health, water and food supplies of downstream communities in the north. That's why tar sands oil is called "dirty oil". By stopping Enbridge in BC, the expansion of the tar sands' harmful impacts can be slowed.



Photo courtesy of Josh Paterson, Staff Lawyer at West Coast Environmental Law.



Many First Nations in BC have signed the Save the Fraser Declaration, which bans Enbridge's tankers and pipelines in the Fraser River watershed.



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