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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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BC Nature brings lawsuit to halt Northern Gateway approval

Less than a month after the Northern Gateway Joint Review Panel (JRP)'s report was published, the first lawsuits aimed at stopping the proposed project have now been filed.

Today, BC Nature (the Federation of British Columbia Naturalists) filed an application for judicial review in the Federal Court of Appeal, asking that the JRP's report be declared invalid and that the approval process be halted until its court challenge is heard.

The Environmental Law Centre at the University of Victoria (ELC) represented BC Nature as intervenors at the lengthy JRP hearings that concluded in June 2013. The ELC drafted the application and will represent BC Nature in the forthcoming lawsuit.

"We feel we have no choice but to continue this battle for as long as is necessary", says John Neville, President of BC Nature. "This project presents unique and unprecedented threats to the environmental and social values that British Columbians hold dear."

The JRP's Report, issued on December 19, 2013, recommended that the proposed Northern Gateway project be approved, with 209 conditions. The final say rests with the Federal Cabinet, who has 180 days to decide on the fate of the project.

The application filed in Federal Court today identifies almost a dozen legal errors that it claims the JRP made in recommending approval of the project.

"The JRP's report has numerous legal flaws, including its conclusion that the project's adverse effects on caribou were justified and that there were no likely significant adverse environmental effects associated with a large oil spill," says Chris Tollefson, BC Nature's lawyer and Executive Director of the ELC. "Our client decided these deficiencies could not go unchallenged."

Neville adds: "The possible elimination of a caribou herd and the real threat this project poses to the marine environment are just not acceptable."

The petition is also critical of the JRP's conclusions that the project would not have significant adverse effects on marine birds, and of the report's general lack of "intelligibility and transparency".

The Canadian government and Northern Gateway have thirty days to file their response to the lawsuit.

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO ARRANGE INTERVIEWS, CONTACT:

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About the University of Victoria Environmental Law Centre

www.elc.uvic.ca

The ELC Society is a registered, non-profit society whose Board of Directors is comprised of diverse and experienced members, including law students, lawyers, law professors, and members of the community. The ELC provides pro bono legal representation and legal assistance to community groups, conservation groups and First Nations; produces citizen handbooks and other public legal education materials; and advocates on a wide range of environmental law reform issues.

About BC Nature

<http://www.bcnature.ca/>

BC Nature is a provincial charitable organization whose motto is to "know nature and keep it worth knowing". It aims to provide over 5,000 naturalists and 51 clubs in BC with a unified voice on conservation and environmental issues; and to foster an awareness, appreciation and understanding of the natural environment so that it may be wisely used and maintained for future generations.