



MEDIA RELEASE

REJECT NORTHERN GATEWAY AS INCOMPLETE SAY NATURE GROUPS

June 17, 2013 (Terrace, BC) — BC Nature and Nature Canada will make their final oral argument today before the Joint Review Panel, which is considering the future of the Enbridge Northern Gateway project. These nature conservation groups are urging the Panel to conclude that the Northern Gateway application is incomplete, and therefore must be rejected.

Under the *National Energy Board Act*, the Panel can only make a recommendation to the federal cabinet if it concludes that the pipeline application is complete. Even if the Panel recommends against the project, cabinet can reject the Panel's recommendation. However, if the Panel concludes that the application is incomplete, there is no recommendation to cabinet, and cabinet cannot approve the project.

BC Nature and Nature Canada have been joint intervenors in the Northern Gateway review process for two years. During that time, they have led evidence on the project's potential impacts on the SARA listed woodland caribou and on terrestrial and marine birds, and have cross-examined Northern Gateway experts at four witness panels for a total of 25 hours.

The nature conservation groups contend that Northern Gateway's environmental assessment is deficient and incomplete for a variety of reasons. These include its failure:

- to properly assess impacts on SARA listed woodland caribou,
- to provide a detailed baseline inventory of wildlife species impacted by the project,
- to analyze consequences of oil spills on marine bird populations, and
- to properly estimate the likelihood of an oil spill from tankers along the BC coast.

“The Exxon Valdez oil spill has shown us the catastrophic impact a spill can have on the marine bird species in the Pacific coast, some of which have yet to show signs of recovery after more than two decades,” says Rosemary Fox, BC Nature's Conservation Chair. “Northern Gateway's claim that marine ecosystems recover within an average of five years after an oil spill shows that they have not learnt anything from the Exxon Valdez experience.”

In its recent written final argument to the Panel, the Province of British Columbia recommends against approval of the project. This argument is based mainly on the inadequacy of information Northern Gateway has put forward regarding oil spill response, prevention, recovery, and mitigation.

“We support the BC government's stance against this project. Northern Gateway's spill response plans are woefully inadequate,” says Ian Davidson, Executive Director of Nature Canada.

“However, Northern Gateway's application is also deficient in many other areas, such as baseline inventories of globally and continentally significant marine bird populations and Important Bird Areas impacted by this project,” Davidson says. “In our opinion, the only reasonable conclusion that the Panel can draw is that the application is incomplete, and therefore must be rejected.”

Media contact:

Ian Davidson
Executive Director, Nature Canada
(613) 562-3447 ext. 231
idavidson@naturecanada.ca

Rosemary Fox
Conservation Chair, BC Nature
(250) 847-5150
rosemaryjfox@gmail.com

Chris Tollefson
Executive Director, Environmental Law Centre
Hakai Chair in Environmental Law and Sustainability
Legal Counsel to BC Nature and Nature Canada
250-888-6074
ctollef@uvic.ca

About Nature Canada

Nature Canada is a national charitable organization that works for a vision of Canada as a place where threatened species are protected, wildlife habitat is preserved, and people embrace a culture of conservation in their everyday lives. We are the Canadian co-partner in BirdLife International, a global partnership of conservation organizations that conserve birds, habitat and global biodiversity.

About BC Nature

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 53 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.

About the UVic Environmental Law Centre

The Environmental Law Centre is a non-profit society that, in partnership with the UVic Faculty of Law, established and operates Canada’s first public interest environmental law clinic program. Through this program, the ELC provides pro bono legal representation and assistance to conservation and community organizations, and First Nations throughout BC. It also advocates on a wide range of environmental law reform issues.