



NEWS RELEASE

Enbridge delay gives North Coast temporary reprieve

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SOINTULA, B.C. — The decision by Enbridge to delay its Gateway pipeline and tanker project gives coastal B.C. reason to breathe a sigh of relief, if only temporarily. The Calgary-based energy delivery company suggested that market conditions led to postponing the project that has faced strong opposition from First Nations and communities along the pipeline and tanker route.

“Enbridge should respond to the opposition to the Gateway project by completely withdrawing their application, instead of just delaying it,” says Oonagh O’Connor, offshore oil and gas campaign coordinator of Living Oceans Society. “Until then coastal communities are living under the threat of this megaproject.”

The Gateway project would run pipelines carrying 400,000 barrels of crude oil per day from the Alberta tar sands to Kitimat, where giant oil tankers would load the oil before navigating the dangerous waters of the Inside Passage and Hecate Strait, where over half of the fish caught in B.C. migrate or originate.

“The story doesn’t end here,” says Jennifer Lash, Living Ocean Society’s Executive Director. “Enbridge could come back when the demands of the marketplace change, and there are several other pipeline and tanker projects proposed for the North Coast. If Enbridge proceeds and the other projects are approved, we could see over 300 tankers passing through coastal waters every year.”

Three out of four British Columbians support a ban on oil tankers in the Inside Passage, according to three polls conducted over the past year. Nonetheless, the Federal Government seems hesitant to enforce the moratorium on tanker traffic.

Since April 2006, seven tankers carrying condensate have traveled through the Inside Passage to the port of Kitimat to offload. Condensate is a toxic mix of chemicals and petroleum derivatives used to dilute the thick crude from the tar sands. These tankers are passing through the exact area where the B.C. Ferries’ Queen of the North sank in March 2006.

“We will continue to work with the Federal and Provincial Governments to strengthen and enforce the 34-year old moratorium on offshore oil and gas activities, which includes oil tanker traffic,” Lash says.

The moratorium on oil and gas development and tanker traffic was established in the early 1970s to protect the ecologically sensitive coast from the threat of oil spills.

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