
FACTSHEET

November 25, 2014

Environmental Assessment Office

Westcoast Connector Gas Transmission project granted environmental assessment approval

VICTORIA – Environment Minister Mary Polak and Natural Gas Development Minister Rich Coleman have issued an Environmental Assessment Certificate for the Westcoast Connector Gas Transmission pipeline project, which is located in northern BC, from the Cypress Area in northeast BC (100 km northwest of Fort St. John) to the Prince Rupert LNG terminal being proposed by the BG Group at Ridley Island near Prince Rupert.

There are 43 conditions that are part of the Environmental Assessment Certificate. Design restrictions are specified in the Certified Project Description. Each of the conditions and the Certified Project Description are legally-binding requirements that Westcoast Connector Gas Transmission Ltd. must meet to be in compliance with the certificate.

The certificate conditions were developed following consultation and input from Aboriginal groups, government agencies, communities and the public. Key conditions for the project require Westcoast Connector Gas Transmission Ltd. to:

- mitigate effects on caribou by avoiding sensitive habitat wherever possible, avoiding increased impacts from predators and providing up to \$2 million to fund caribou and predator monitoring work;
- prevent mortality risks to grizzly bears from displacement and disturbance and contribute up to \$875,000 to support the conservation and management of regional grizzly bear populations;
- develop a greenhouse gas management plan that includes adherence to the Ministry of Natural Gas Development's guidance on *Best Available Techniques Economically Achievable*, regulatory requirements to report on greenhouse gas emissions and site-specific mitigations;
- mitigate and monitor the effects on crab movement, including adaptive management measures if crab movement is materially impaired;
- manage and monitor marine sediment and contaminated sediments during construction activity;
- identify areas of old growth forest for new protection to replace currently-protected old growth forest affected by the project at final route selection;
- develop a strategy for salvaging marketable timber for commercial use;
- continue to consult with Aboriginal groups on the project, including opportunities to participate in monitoring programs during project construction; and
- develop and implement a social and economic effects management plan to ensure strong engagement with local governments to minimize effects on community infrastructure and services.

In addition, Westcoast Connector Gas Transmission Ltd. proposed a number of important route changes to avoid or decrease potential adverse effects, based on feedback and input from Aboriginal groups and the technical working group during the environmental assessment. Some of the key changes included:

- South Peace Caribou Herds – to avoid identified core habitat areas and reduce potential impacts on the Treaty 8 right to hunt;
- Wolverine Caribou – to avoid or minimize the impact on identified sensitive areas;
- Kwanika Mine – to reduce potential interactions between the pipeline and future mine-site development;
- Callazon Creek – to reduce potential impacts to bull trout in Callazon Creek;
- Babine/Skeena River Area – to avoid potential riparian habitat disturbances and meet visual quality objectives for the area;
- Borden Mainline Forest Service Road and Cranberry River Crossing – moved the route further north to minimize clearing in the Gitanyow First Nations ecosystem core area;
- Chatham Sound – to avoid potential interference with glass sponge colonies; and
- West of Prince Rupert – to avoid the Metlakatla shellfish tenure application.

The Westcoast Connector Gas Transmission pipeline will require various federal, provincial and local government permits. The majority of provincial permits are provided through the BC Oil & Gas Commission, the primary operational regulator of oil and gas activities in BC. The Environmental Assessment Office will work closely with the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation and permitting agencies to ensure seamless regulatory oversight, from the environmental assessment through subsequent permitting. The Environmental Assessment Office will co-ordinate compliance management efforts with other government agencies to ensure that the office is satisfied that certificate conditions are met.

Westcoast Connector Gas Transmission Ltd. was formed for the purpose of pursuing the project on behalf of Spectra Energy Transmission and BG International Ltd. The company proposes to construct and operate up to two 42 to 48-inch (1067 to 1219 mm) diameter sweet natural gas transmission pipelines of up to 860 km in length.

The estimated capital cost is \$7.5 billion. Construction would generate 13,400 person-years of direct employment in BC. During the 50 years of operations, 120 full-time jobs would be created.

The project required a provincial environmental assessment as it would be a new transmission pipeline with a diameter of greater than 323.9 mm and a length greater than 40 km.

British Columbia's environmental assessment process involves a rigorous, thorough review that provides for significant opportunities for Aboriginal groups, government agencies and the public to provide input on the potential for environmental, economic, social, heritage and health effects from a proposed project.