
FACTSHEET

November 25, 2014

Environmental Assessment Office

Prince Rupert 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 Prince Rupert Gas Transmission pipeline project, which is located in northern BC, from near the District of Hudson's Hope to the proposed Pacific Northwest LNG export facility on Lelu Island in the District of Port Edward.

There are 45 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 Prince Rupert 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 Prince Rupert Gas Transmission Ltd. to:

- mitigate effects on caribou by avoiding sensitive caribou 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 \$750,000 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 effects on crab movement, including implementing adaptive management measures if crab movement is materially impaired;
- manage and monitor marine sediment during construction activity;
- conduct a detailed geotechnical and risk assessment to mitigate scour risks at the approach to Lelu Island and in the Nass Bottomlands;
- 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, Prince Rupert 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:

- Peace River Crossing Alternatives – addresses geotechnical issues and incorporates input from West Moberly First Nations and Saulneau First Nations;
- South Central Alternative – avoids crossing Lake Babine, the Lake Babine Indian Reserve and Rainbow Alley Provincial Park; also avoids the Wolverine caribou herd;
- Gitanyow Alternative – in response to input from Gitanyow Hereditary Chiefs; minimizes impacts to ecosystem network and minimalizes impacts to wildlife and other resources used by Gitanyow for hunting, fishing, and plant gathering;
- Nisga’a Highway Lava Bed Alternative – parallels the Nisga’a Highway right-of-way to avoid effects to culturally important historic villages and spiritual sites, community watersheds, wetlands and key fish spawning habitats;
- Mackenzie Reroute – located further from the Gantahaz subdivision in response to concerns raised by local residents;
- Nation River and Saslo Dome Reroutes – decreases impacts to habitation and sacred area interests in response to concerns raised by Nak’azdli First Nations;
- Middle River Reroute – avoids traditionally important fisheries, archaeological and cultural areas in response to concerns raised by the Tl’azt’en Nation and decreases overlap with mineral tenures;
- Middle River Compressor Station Relocation – avoids traditionally important fisheries, as a result of concerns raised by Tl’azt’en Nation and decreases overlap with guide outfitter tenures, trapline tenures and timber cut blocks;
- Nilkitkwa Lake and Morrison Headwaters Alternatives – decreases impacts to Lake Babine Nation’s identified Critical Cultural Zones and impacts to Lake Babine Nation’s Aboriginal interests as a result of consultation with Lake Babine Nation;
- Johnson Creek Compressor Station Alternative – decreases impacts to exercise of Treaty 8 rights, the proximity of the compressor station to local wildlife habitat, and the visual impact from the Johnson Creek forest service road as a result of concerns raised by West Moberly First Nations and Saulneau First Nations.

The Prince Rupert 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.

Prince Rupert Gas Transmission Ltd. is a wholly-owned subsidiary of TransCanada Pipelines Ltd. The company proposes to construct and operate a 36 to 48-inch (914 to 1219 mm) diameter sweet natural gas pipeline of up to 900 km in length.

The estimated capital cost is \$5 billion. Construction would generate 8,250 person-years of direct employment in B.C. During the 40 years of operations, 23 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.

On October 30, 2014, the government introduced the *Nisga'a Final Agreement Amendment Act*, which, if passed, will establish the Nisga'a Nation as the primary property taxation authority over Nisga'a Lands. The legislation gives effect to the Real Property Tax Co-ordination Agreement between the Province and the Nisga'a Nation which enables the Nisga'a Lisims Government to levy and collect property tax from persons other than Nisga'a citizens, including companies that operate industrial installations, such as LNG pipelines and midstream infrastructure.

Also on October 30, 2014, the government introduced the *Protected Areas of British Columbia Amendment Act (No. 2), 2014*, which will remove 63.5 hectares from Nisga'a Memorial Lava Bed Park. This will assist the Prince Rupert Gas Transmission pipeline project to move forward if all regulatory approvals are received.

On November 20, 2014, the Nisga'a Nation and the Province signed a pipeline benefit agreement that will guarantee the Nation benefits from development of the Prince Rupert Gas Transmission Pipeline project on Nisga'a Lands and in the Nass area. The Nisga'a Nation will receive approximately \$6 million from the Province at various stages in the project and will also receive a yet-to-be-determined share of \$10 million a year in ongoing benefits that will be available to First Nations along the pipeline.

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.