

November 19, 2015

The Honourable Catherine McKenna, M.P.
Minister of Environment and Climate Change
Parliament Buildings,
Ottawa, Ontario, Canada
K1A 0H3

By email: Minister@ec.gc.ca ; hardcopy mailed to addressee on date above

Dear Madam Minister:

Re: Woodfibre LNG Project in Howe Sound, British Columbia

We the undersigned are writing to formally request that you suspend the Environmental Assessment (EA) process for Woodfibre LNG Project in Howe Sound, BC until a thorough and credible EA is done for this project. We represent volunteer citizen organizations that are opposed to locating an LNG plant and its associated LNG shipping in Howe Sound, an iconic fjord on Vancouver's doorstep whose ecosystem is just now recovering from past industrial damage. We believe this request is consistent with the EA and climate change policies your party espoused in the recent federal election¹, the key elements of which are quoted below. We especially want this decision – possibly the first for an LNG export plant in Canada – to set a creditable precedent for the twenty others currently proposed.

As you may be aware, at the request of British Columbia (BC), your predecessor approved a Substitution Decision (February 19th, 2014) under which a British Columbia EA of this project was substituted for a portion of the federal EA under CEAA2012. In the letter of April 28th 2014 from My Sea to Sky counsel William Andrews to Minister Aglukkaq (attached), we argued that the substituted BC EA process is inadequate, incomplete, unfair, lacks scientific objectivity and contains unsubstantiated claims minimizing safety concerns and environmental damages. It is especially deficient in its scientific scrutiny of public safety, environmental and socio-economic impacts. It lacked opportunities for meaningful public input, especially from independent scientists.

¹ **Environmental Assessments:** *Canadians must be able to trust that government will engage in appropriate regulatory oversight, including credible environmental assessments, and that it will respect the rights of those most affected, such as indigenous communities. While governments grant permits for resource development, only communities can grant permission. We will immediately review Canada's environmental assessment processes and introduce new, fair processes that will:*

- *restore robust oversight and thorough environmental assessments of areas under federal jurisdiction, while also working with provinces and territories to avoid duplication;*
- *ensure that the decisions are based on science, facts and evidence, and serve the public's interest*
- *provide ways for Canadians to express their views and opportunities for experts to meaningfully participate; and*
- *require project advocates to choose the best technologies available to reduce environmental impacts.*

Climate Change: *We will also ensure that environmental assessments include an analysis of upstream impacts and greenhouse gas emissions resulting from projects under review.*

Legislation changes: *We will review...legislative changes... (to the Fisheries Act, the Navigable Waters Act and the Species at Risk Act), and will restore lost protections and incorporate more modern safeguards.*

Scope

On three fronts, the BC EA fails to meet the full scope as required in your Ministry's scoping letter of May 29th, 2014 (issued from your BC office).

1. That scope specified that the EA "include marine activities from the liquefied natural gas facility and marine terminal site as far as Passage Island at the entrance to Howe Sound" The BC EA did not cover the impacts of the project's marine activities as far as Passage Island, which include potentially devastating impacts along the proposed LNG tanker route adjacent to many of the communities bordering on Howe Sound including West Vancouver, Bowen Island, Village of Lions Bay, and others.
 - The leading scientific reports and evidence on LNG spills over water and the consequent dangers to the public were ignored. Our new government promises "evidence-based policies" yet the BC Assessment Report ignores the leading scientific evidence viewed as critical in other countries.
 - These regulations should be at least as rigorous as those in peer-group nations with more experience in LNG matters than Canada's. An example of science and fact based regulations now lacking in Canada can be found in the United States Navigation and Vessel Inspection Circular (NVIC) No. 01-2011 "Guidance Related to Waterfront Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG)"
<<https://www.uscg.mil/hq/cg5/nvic/pdf/2011/NVIC%2001-2011%20Final.pdf>>
2. The BC EA scope did not cover impacts of the route beyond Passage Island (near Bowen Island) out to the Canadian territorial limit off the west coast of Vancouver Island. In 2008 the Islands Trust Council voted to support a ban on the passage of LNG tankers in the waters of the Malaspina, Georgia, Juan de Fuca and Haro Straits, and Boundary Pass. See attached Islands Trust July 17, 2014 and March 23, 2015 letters to the EAO.

<http://www.islandstrust.bc.ca/media/276960/environmentalassessmentwoodfibre.pdf> and <<http://goo.gl/iDNsQW>>
3. The scope also specified that the EA "*consider any changes the project may cause to the environment outside of Canada*". In contrast to your Ministry's requirements for inclusion of broad environmental considerations, the B.C. EA disallowed any arguments relating to the upstream (fracking) and downstream (GHG emissions) effects of the extraction, transport, liquefaction and combustion of this methane. Your government's stated policy is that "*We will also ensure that environmental assessments include an analysis of upstream impacts and greenhouse gas emissions resulting from projects under review*"

Impacts on Marine Life

The BC Assessment Report also approved a once-through seawater cooling process banned in California, New York and elsewhere (see <http://www.energy.ca.gov/2005publications/CEC-700-2005-013/CEC-700-2005-013.PDF>). It contravenes established policies of Fisheries & Oceans Canada in regard to marine species protections including documented herring spawning in the vicinity of the Woodfibre site as well as impacts on salmon and other essential species. Residents fear that, should this plant be approved, its intake entrapments and hourly discharge of 17,000 tonnes of hot, chlorinated water into the Sound will severely damage its recovering marine life.

Social License

The project has failed to achieve any measure of social license in affected local communities. The Woodfibre Project has been opposed in various measures by The District of Squamish, Village of Lions Bay, District of West Vancouver, Bowen Island Municipality, Gambier Island Local Trust Committee, Island Trust Council, Township of Gibsons, Sunshine Coast Regional District, Power River Regional District and the Tsleil-Waututh First Nation, whose elected municipal governments have all passed motions expressing concerns about the project.

Nevertheless, on October 26th, 2015, the BC Ministry of Environment and Ministry of Natural Gas Development approved this highly controversial project and forwarded the [BC Assessment Report](#) to your Ministry for review and decision.

Our arguments for suspending this review are set out in our counsel's attached letter of April 28th.

In summary, we feel that BC is proposing to develop this hazardous industry in an inappropriate location without first implementing a regime of regulations and regulatory oversight. Canada has no legislation or regulation whatsoever on properly siting LNG plants or reviewing the routes LNG tankers must take to navigate to and from a proposed LNG site. BC has not given sufficient regard to its environmental and safety consequences for Howe Sound and its inhabitants.

We contend that both the NEB and EA processes by which the project has proceeded to this point are deeply flawed, and the undersigned volunteer citizen organizations request that these processes be suspended and approval withheld until those flaws are corrected and the process is repeated from a point where decision data required for improved processes are gathered and examined in a rigorous, fair, transparent and objective process.

Your Government's election promises bring added impetus to bear on the scope and weaknesses of the NEB and EA processes and add to the arguments for suspension.

That would indeed be Real Change.

Yours very truly

Eoin Finn
My Sea to Sky, Squamish, BC (<http://www.myseatosky.org>)

Fitch Cady
Concerned Citizens Bowen, Bowen Island, Howe Sound (<http://ccb Bowen.ca/>)

cc The Honourable Hunter Tootoo, Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and Coast Guard

The Honourable Marc Garneau, Minister of Transport

The Honourable Ralph Goodale, Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness

The Honourable Jim Carr, Minister of Natural Resources

Pamela Goldsmith-Jones, MP, West Vancouver -Sunshine Coast -Sea to Sky Country