



A banner was hung near the camp built by the Uni'stoten clan of the Wet'suwet'en First Nation in the right-of-way of the Pacific Trails pipeline.

Dawn Paley

## LNG Pipedreams: Fractured futures and community resistance

by Leila Darwish

The fight against fracking, fracked gas pipelines and liquefied natural gas (LNG) terminals is heating up in B.C. Resistance is on the rise as communities across B.C. are coming together to take a stand against a fractured future and oppose Premier Clark's dangerous and dirty LNG pipedreams.

LNG is anything but natural. It is fracked gas that has been liquefied by super cooling the gas to  $-163^{\circ}\text{C}$  so it can be exported in some of the largest tankers in the world. There are six northern and six southern corridor pipelines proposed to connect the fracked gas fields in the northeast of the province to the proposed LNG export terminals and tankers on the West Coast.

The combined impacts from fracking, fracked gas pipeline construction, gas liquefaction and exports make LNG a major contributor to global climate change. The gas boom in British Columbia could result in an additional 73 million tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions per year, which would amount to about the same as Alberta's tar sands as early as 2020. Considering that 14 LNG projects have been proposed, five of those terminals alone would more than double B.C.'s current climate footprint.

Fracking has devastating impacts on local watersheds and ecosystems. More than 600 chemicals have been used in fracking, and many of these chemicals have been linked to cancer or muta-

tions, and result in impacts to people's nervous, immune and cardiovascular systems. Assuming that 9 of 10 proposed wells were fracked, about 582 billion litres of water would be contaminated during the fracking process. The Fort Nelson First Nation has stated that fracking on their territories represents "the largest and most destructive industrial force that our waters have ever known." The boom in proposed LNG developments could result in a 600 per cent increase in fracking on their already heavily impacted territory.

Lelu Island and Ridley Island near Prince Rupert are both being considered as locations for LNG terminals. According to a recent study by scientists at Simon Fraser University, the areas around the Pacific Northwest LNG and Prince Rupert LNG are home to some of the most important salmon species within the Skeena watershed and are among the last places on Earth with healthy populations of wild salmon. If granted environmental licences, the two LNG projects would dredge hundreds of thousands of cubic metres of underwater sediment to construct berths for 500 LNG carrier tankers to travel each year. The scientists cautioned that the destruction from this construction and ongoing transportation could have serious impacts on Skeena salmon – impacts the species may never recover from.

Recent changes by the B.C. government are paving the way for pipeline and LNG development. The government recently passed Bill 4, the Park Amendment Act, which will open protected park areas to pipelines and drilling. The government is also trying to pass Bill 24, which would decimate the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) and put much of it at risk from industrial development such as fracking, pipelines and the diversion of water for oil and gas.

### **Opposition to fracking and LNG is growing**

At an LNG industry summit hosted by the Fort Nelson First Nation in April, Fort Nelson Chief Sharleen Gale ordered

B.C. government officials and industry to exit the conference after the government's surprise move to gut environmental reviews for gas plants without consulting First Nations. The government quickly reversed the decision. "The Fort Nelson First Nation, on behalf of our ancestors, our elders, our youth and those yet to come are putting the government and the oil and gas industry on notice that B.C.'s LNG Strategy is on hold," said Chief Gale at the summit.

In northwestern B.C., the fracked gas pipelines would have to pass through the unceded territories of the Wet'suwet'en and Gitksan First Nations. The Unist'ot'en Clan of the Wet'suwet'en have a long-standing blockade against the Pacific Trails fracked gas pipeline and other major pipelines that would cross their territory. Freda Huson, spokeswoman for the Unist'ot'en Clan, states: "The Pacific Trails pipeline does not have permission to be on our territory. This is unceded land. [The] Pacific Trails pipeline's proposed route is through two main salmon spawning channels that provide our staple food supply. We have made the message clear to Pacific Trails, Enbridge, and all of industry: We will not permit any pipelines through our territory." The Unist'ot'en have built a cabin, traditional pithouses, permaculture gardens and a bunkhouse for blockaders in the path of these pipelines.

In Hazelton and the Kispiox Valley, concerned residents are organizing. A significant portion of the Kispiox Valley's population signed the Kispiox Declaration, expressing their opposition to the LNG projects.

"It's boom and bust on steroids, like we've never seen here before," said Todd Stockner, a fishing guide in the Kispiox. "There will be some local jobs, but it's only for two to five years at most and then they're gone. And then what do we have after that? We have all the risk. We have all the lingering damages done to our rivers and streams. We have whatever nightmare of social problems that come with three 1,000-person work camps

dropped into a valley of 240 people." He adds, "What we have here now is an economy that is enduring and resilient. A wild salmon economy in the Skeena Watershed creates \$110 million a year and that could be happening every year as long as we take care of it, which these projects are not going to do."

Closer to Vancouver, the proposed LNG terminal in Howe Sound near Squamish is being contested by local residents.

"At a local level, we're looking at potential air pollution, light and noise pollution, and impacts to marine species due to underwater noise pollution. The community is very concerned about the safety of this proposed LNG facility, and the possibility of explosions and spills," said Tracey Saxby, one of the founders of My Sea to Sky, a community group in Squamish.

Several nearby municipal councils, including Gibsons, West Vancouver, Lions Bay and the Sunshine Coast Regional District recently passed resolutions or wrote letters opposing the Woodfibre LNG or LNG tankers in Howe Sound. LNG terminals are also proposed for Campbell River and the west coast of Vancouver Island.

At the recent LNG counter-summit in Vancouver, Grand Chief Stewart Phillip from the Union of BC Indian Chiefs said, "The economy of this province is being built on the destruction of the natural environment. And the pipelines that are being contemplated by LNG will further destroy the north. We have a social responsibility as human beings, as grandparents and parents, to lend our support to Treaty 8, to all the people in the north who are fighting so valiantly to push back this agenda."

From the northeast corner to the northwest coast, to Vancouver and Vancouver Island, let's send a clear message to Premier Clark and industry representatives: No Fracking, No Pipelines, No LNG!

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