



Pipelines of Discord, Spring of Possibilities

By Daniel Cayley-Daoust, Energy and Climate Justice Campaigner

Last November, the Council of Canadians helped coordinate more than 50 vigils across the country to oppose Kinder Morgan's Trans Mountain pipeline.

Sixteen Council of Canadians chapters took part, but despite massive opposition shown by communities and Indigenous nations, and the concerns they raised about unmitigated risks to water and the climate, the Trudeau government went ahead and approved the pipeline project. This pipeline expansion will mean even more tar sands production and make it less likely for Canada to meet its climate change reduction commitments.

In fact, by early 2017 the Trudeau government approved and began promoting three major pipeline projects: Kinder Morgan's 890,000 barrels per day Trans Mountain pipeline, Enbridge's 760,000 barrels per day Line 3 pipeline, and TransCanada's 830,000 barrels per day Keystone XL pipeline. In early June, Liberal and Conservative MPs voted in support of a motion affirming federal support of the Kinder Morgan pipeline in an effort to squelch growing provincial opposition.

The good news is that federal approval does not mean these pipelines are a done deal. Indigenous communities are leading the resistance to these projects in order to protect the water and the health of their communities. First Nations and environmental groups have launched several lawsuits to challenge federal approvals for the Kinder Morgan and Line 3 pipelines, and U.S. groups are challenging U.S. President Donald Trump's recent approval of Keystone XL.

With your generous support, the Council of Canadians has helped connect communities in the fights against the pipelines. We have also questioned the financing of these companies. Kinder Morgan's Trans



Stop Kinder Morgan Vigil, Ottawa, Canada. Photo by 350.org, CC by-nc-sa 2.0

Mountain pipeline, for example, has been facing financial troubles in the U.S. When it was reported earlier this year that the company was approaching institutional investors such as the Canada Pension Plan Investment Board (CPPIB) and the Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan (OTPP) for funding, the Council of Canadians jumped into action.

The OTPP quickly confirmed it would not invest in the pipeline project. In February we started putting pressure on the CPPIB. More than 7,000 Council of Canadians supporters sent the CPPIB letters, asking the board not to invest their pension funds in building new pipelines. Unfortunately, to date, the CPPIB has remained silent on this issue. The board has until June 30 to make a final investment decision. Until then, we will keep the pressure on. Without additional funding from new sources like the CPPIB, the Kinder Morgan pipeline project may not proceed.

Through the entire process, the National Energy Board (NEB) has been central to recommending that pipelines be built. The NEB continues to be a rubber-stamping agency with close ties to the industry it is supposed to regulate.

The Trudeau government has promised to reform the NEB through the NEB Modernization process, but has appointed pro-pipeline industry insiders to lead the review. The Council of Canadians and its chapter activists across Canada have been speaking out about this biased approach. The NEB needs to be transformed to eliminate conflicts of interest and become a true regulator in the public interest.

As both Kinder Morgan and Enbridge are setting their sights to start early phases of construction in the fall for their respective pipelines, the movement of opposition continues to grow.

With your generous support, the Council of Canadians is working to build a movement for climate solutions where justice, energy democracy and community-led initiatives are valued in the hope of building a vision for a fossil fuel-free future. There is a lot of work to be done to achieve this and to stop these pipeline projects from moving forward – thank you for being a part of it!

Web: canadians.org/kinder-morgan