

Communities can say “no” to pipelines and tankers

Potential pipeline and tanker spills could be devastating to residents’ health, to local ecosystems, and to businesses and jobs dependent on clean land and water.

There are a number of precedents of communities concerned about oil pipelines passing through their borders taking action.

Kinder Morgan

In British Columbia, Gregor Robertson, the Mayor of Vancouver, put forward a motion that directed city staff to apply for intervener status at the National Energy Board hearing for the Kinder Morgan pipeline. The motion outlines the serious concerns that city has with the pipeline.¹

The town of Burnaby has formally requested² the National Energy Board reject the proposed expansion of the Kinder Morgan pipeline due to a lack of sufficient information. Burnaby’s Mayor, Derek Corrigan, said “we are extremely concerned about multiple aspects of this proposal that we know will have very negative impacts on our city.”

Enbridge Northern Gateway Pipeline

The Union of British Columbia Municipalities passed a resolution³ opposing Enbridge Inc.’s proposed Northern Gateway pipeline.

Oil Tanker Traffic

In light of the devastating and long-lasting effects a crude oil spill would have on B.C.’s coast, the Union of British Columbia Municipalities approved a resolution⁴ that rejects the expansion of oil tanker traffic through British Columbia’s coastal waters. The resolution calls on provincial party leaders to use whatever legislative and administrative powers they have to prevent oil tanker expansion.

Energy East

Marcel Corriveau, the Mayor of Saint-Augustin-de-Desmaures in Quebec, has stated that the proposed pipeline route is “not suitable” for the municipality with it passing so close to residences along the St. Lawrence River. Mayor Corriveau and the city council planned to reject the proposed route⁵ and adopt a resolution to suggest a new route.

Danielle Roy Marinelli, the Mayor of Lévis in Quebec, is considering the position⁶ the city will take on the pipeline. The formation of a committee has been recommended, and Mayor Marinelli hopes it will allow them to take a position.

Gaetan Gamache, the Mayor of Rivière-du-Loup in Quebec, has publicly expressed his impatience⁷ at being forced to wait for more information on the proposed marine terminal for the area.

André Caron, the Mayor of the municipality L’Islet in Quebec has voiced concerns⁸ over the long-term impacts of the pipeline. In September 2013, the city council agreed⁹ to ask the Bureau d’audiences publiques sur l’environnement (Quebec’s environmental regulatory board) to conduct a public study of the concerns about the pipeline.

Cyrille Simard, the Mayor of Edmundston in New Brunswick, wrote a blog¹⁰ on the city of Edmundston’s website voicing his opinion that they would never accept a pipeline¹¹ that would endanger their water supplies or future development. TransCanada has subsequently changed the pipeline route in the area.

Al McDonald, the Mayor of North Bay, is seeking intervener status¹² at the National Energy Board hearings. The Ontario Energy Minister will be there to voice the concerns of the province, but Mayor McDonald believes that he will be able to best represent the community and convey their concerns.

The City of Winnipeg has expressed concerns¹³ regarding the threat of a leak to their water supply. The city, along with Manitoba Conservation and Water Stewardship, plans to prepare a brief outlining environmental concerns and present it to the National Energy Board.

Enbridge Line 9

Denis Coderre, the Mayor of Montreal, has publicly stated his concerns¹⁴ over environmental safeguards, economic benefits and financial resources if a disaster were to occur along Line 9. Coderre stated, “They’re going under the Ottawa River, so there’s an issue there. You have two million people who are taking their drinkable water from there so it’s all about asking questions. I’m not signing a cheque, I’m not signing a contract until I have my own answers.”

The cities of Toronto and Hamilton took a more comprehensive approach with Line 9. In September 2012, the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) directed staff¹⁵ to report back on the potential hazards of the Line 9 project to the TRCA watersheds and the Greater Toronto Area’s drinking water.

At the Toronto City Council meeting on February 20, 2013, the City Solicitor reported¹⁶ that the primary areas of concern are the integrity of the pipeline, the safe handling of diluted bitumen and contingency measures in light of a spill. Further, the city council adopted a motion¹⁷ at this meeting to authorize the City Solicitor to apply to the National Energy Board for Toronto to have intervener status.

On April 3, 2014, Toronto City Council passed a motion¹⁸ calling on Ontario’s Ministry of Environment to order an environmental assessment of the pipeline. The council is also pressing Enbridge for more details on the project.

In Hamilton, Mayor Bob Bartina publicly raised concerns¹⁹ by sending the city’s resolution that called for more detailed information and an environmental assessment of the project to the Minister of the Environment’s office. The request for an environmental assessment was ultimately rejected. The city of Hamilton has now created a pipeline unit²⁰ to respond to issues that have surfaced, including assessing the city’s ability to respond if a spill were to occur. The Director of Planning and Growth, Guy Paparella, who was involved in the creation of the pipeline unit, has also expressed his frustration that the local voice is being lost in the process.

Notes

- 1 former.vancouver.ca/ctyclerk/cclerk/20131218/documents/cfsc2.pdf
- 2 www.burnabynow.com/news/burnaby-calls-kinder-morgan-s-pipeline-proposal-incomplete-1.902682
- 3 www.financialpost.com/municipalities+oppose+Enbridge+pipeline/3610324/story.html
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- 5 www.lapresse.ca/le-soleil/actualites/environnement/201308/23/01-4682760-oleoduc-a-saint-augustin-de-desmaures-le-maire-exige-un-nouveau-trace.php
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- 7 www.lapresse.ca/le-soleil/actualites/les-regions/201312/21/01-4723287-pipeline-transcanada-est-le-maire-de-riviere-du-loup-veut-lheure-juste.php
- 8 www.radio-canada.ca/regions/est-quebec/2013/09/04/004-oleoduc-islet-bape.shtml
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