



Lake Babine Nation

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MEDIA RELEASE

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Lake Babine vows to fight pipeline, protect their aboriginal rights

Burns Lake, June 17, 2014: Lake Babine Nation was extremely disappointed to learn of the Federal Cabinet's decision to authorize the Enbridge Northern Gateway Project (the "Project") under the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, 2012*.

Lake Babine Nation is comprised of over 2400 members, making it one of the largest First Nations along the pipeline route. Lake Babine Nation Chief Wilf Adam: "We hold Aboriginal title, fishing rights, and a full range of other harvesting rights to the area that will be affected by the pipeline, yet the Federal Government has approved the Project without adequately consulting and accommodating us."

Although the Joint Review Panel (JRP) had approved the Project, it raised concerns that the Federal Government ignored: "project effects, in combination with cumulative effects, (are) likely to be significant for certain populations of . . . grizzly bear." Grizzly bear is very important to Lake Babine Nation, as are other big game such as moose.

Chief Wilf Adam: "The cumulative effects of the Project, when added to prior and ongoing development, will decimate our constitutionally protected aboriginal rights. We had hoped that the Federal Government would take a more proactive role in protecting our rights. We are very concerned that the key species that support our rights will be irreparably harmed. The public interest is not upheld when constitutional rights are ignored."

Although the Federal Government claims that the JRP conditions are sufficient to meet outstanding concerns, the JRP was not mandated to make any determinations about aboriginal rights. Says Chief Wilf Adam: "We have no faith in the Federal Government's promise to consult post-decision. It's too late to protect our aboriginal rights once the decision has been made to approve the Project."

Lawyers for Lake Babine Nation say that aboriginal rights are a formidable barrier given the cumulative effects of the Project, such as construction, existing linear corridors, and spills. The court process will involve a careful review of aboriginal culture along with the biology of the affected species. Those factual questions will take time to resolve in court, and have not been adequately dealt with by the JRP, if at all.

For more information, contact:

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