



CITY OF BURNABY
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
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March 31, 2015

For immediate release

Mayors Stand Together Against Kinder Morgan Pipeline Proposal

The mayors of Vancouver, Burnaby, New Westminster, City of North Vancouver, Victoria, Squamish and Bowen Island are pushing the federal government to put the Kinder Morgan pipeline proposal on hold until the National Energy Board addresses the significant deficiencies in its public hearing and review process.

All mayors agree that the federal government must step in and introduce a fair and rigorous public hearing process that takes into account input from all stakeholders and cross-examination of witnesses, the same standard applied previously for all other projects.

The current hearing process is deeply flawed and limits cities' abilities to represent the voices of concerned citizens, businesses and communities in an effective way. The lack of oral cross-examination is proving to be a real weakness of the National Energy Board's hearing process.

"The current hearing process does not allow for consideration of some of the most damaging aspects of the proposal – the inadequacy of emergency plans; the potential for marine oil spills; the effects of the project on climate change, and the threat it poses to our local economy," says Vancouver Mayor Gregor Robertson. "We want to demonstrate to our residents and businesses that we are taking the potential risks seriously, and we want to work together with other municipalities in the region to protect our economy, our environment and our people."

“We know that our concerns are shared by communities throughout the province,” says Burnaby mayor Derek Corrigan. “This flawed hearing process disallows review of aspects of the proposal that could cause the most significant damage. It is critical for this project – and for all projects that can harm communities and the environment – that we have federal review processes that are rigorous and transparent.”

“While the federal government’s desire to expedite energy exports is clear, the serious potential impacts of these large-scale projects, both locally and globally, makes a rigorous and transparent review process essential,” says New Westminster Mayor Jonathan Coté. “The process must include the timely disclosure of all necessary information in an easily understandable format and provide all stakeholders with an opportunity for a full cross-examination of project proponents.”

“A comprehensive and transparent public hearing process is essential to ensuring an informed decision is reached regarding the Kinder Morgan pipeline proposal” says City of North Vancouver Mayor Darrell Mussatto. “The City of North Vancouver stands with our neighbours in calling for a hold on the review process until changes are made to respect the democratic rights of all stakeholders to ensure that health, safety, and environmental considerations are carefully examined.”

“The City of Victoria is concerned about the impact of increased tanker traffic on our ecology and our economy,” says Victoria mayor, Lisa Helps. “We’re happy to stand with other municipalities to request a fair and rigorous process to ensure that both are safeguarded for the long term.”

“It is fundamentally important for the National Energy Board to get back to its original purpose as an independent regulator and public watchdog in the protection of landowner rights, the environment and public safety,” says Mayor Patricia Heintzman of Squamish. “In this critically important function it has either become toothless or failed completely. Squamish proudly stands with other communities to call for the reform of the NEB and specifically the inclusion of a robust meaningful hearing process.”

“As mayor of Bowen Island, I personally support this call for change in the public hearing and review process,” says Murray Skeels. “Restricting access to the hearings and narrowing the scope of environmental assessment is not in the public interest.”

The cities that have signed the declaration look forward to working with other affected cities to ensure that an appropriate review process is developed and implemented. Resolutions indicating disapproval of the inadequate National Energy Board review process have already been passed by the Union of British Columbia Municipalities (September 2014) and the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (March 2015).

The mayors of all the cities have agreed to forward the following declaration to the federal and provincial governments:

Mayors' Declaration on Kinder Morgan National Energy Process

On behalf of our municipalities and our citizens who face the risks of Kinder Morgan's proposed Trans Mountain pipeline, the undersigned mayors wish to declare our "Non-Confidence" in the current NEB process.

It has become apparent that the NEB process does not constitute a 'public hearing' and is completely inadequate to assess the health and safety risks of a proposed pipeline through major metropolitan areas, and the potential risks of shipping bitumen oil to Burnaby and through Burrard Inlet, the Salish Sea, and along the coastline of British Columbia.

We have serious concerns that the current NEB panel is neither independent from the oil industry proponents nor ready or able to assess the 'public interest' of British Columbians.

It is no longer a credible process from either a scientific evidentiary basis, nor from a public policy and public interest perspective.

This is not a 'public hearing'. It has become apparent that the evidence presented by Kinder Morgan will never be tested by cross-examination. The second and final round of Intervenor Requests by written questions is nearing completion, and is proving to be inadequate. The proponent has failed to answer the majority of questions submitted by

municipalities and other intervenors, and in IR round one the NEB panel has failed to require reasonable answers. Because of the inadequacies inherent to the review process, hundreds of questions critical to public safety and environmental impacts remain unanswered.

The loss of the standard Public Hearing from the application review process constitutes a significant erosion of the democratic rights of local governments, First Nations and citizens to cross-examine evidence presented, articulate concerns and voice opposition to applications.

The undersigned mayors therefore call on the federal government to put the current NEB process on hold until an adequate process is in place, and to call on the provincial and federal governments, through their appropriate and respective roles, to develop, in consultation with local governments, First Nations, and citizens, the restoration of a full Public Hearing process to be applied to the National Energy Board's consideration of all applications for major industrial project proposals.

We also call upon the Government of British Columbia to re-assert its role in environmental assessment, and to establish a provincial process with proper public hearings to assess this very substantial private proposal.

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