

BC's tourism industry disappointed with NEB recommendation

For Immediate Release

(Campbell River, BC; December 19, 2013) The National Energy Board Joint Review Panel's recommendation to the federal government today, that the Northern Gateway Project be approved with conditions was met with disappointment from BC's tourism industry. "The project approval, even with the 209 conditions, will prove to be very detrimental to tourism businesses and have serious negative impacts on our current economic contribution to the province," says Jim DeHart, President of the Wilderness Tourism Association of BC.

"The Wilderness Tourism Association of BC is opposed to the Northern Gateway Pipeline project as we feel that the risk to our environment, to our homes and to our businesses is unacceptable," said DeHart. "If the Enbridge Pipeline is built and if oil tankers are introduced on the North Coast then an oil spill is guaranteed and oil spills inflict long term damage to local communities, regional economies and the environment. An oil spill from this project would not only wipe out the vibrant tourism businesses on BC's rivers or the north and central coasts, it would have deep impacts the entire provincial tourism industry."

Tourism is a key contributor to British Columbia's GDP and a significant private sector employer for BC. It has also been identified as a growth sector able to make a significant contribution to jobs and wealth creation in the future. Direct tourist expenditures on nature-based tourism products in BC is approximately \$1.5 billion dollars and provides the equivalent of over 26,000 full time jobs. Nature based tourism is also a major driver of BC's \$13 billion plus tourism industry.

"British Columbia is marketed world-wide as being Super, Natural," said DeHart. "The province and industry have invested hundreds of millions of dollars in this brand, which is the reason most people visit British Columbia. In order to protect the resources that support a sustainable tourism industry for BC, this pipeline must not be allowed to proceed and a ban on oil tankers on BC's north coast must be maintained. We urge all levels of government to say no to this project."

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