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300 Scientists Denounce the Joint Review Panel Report

Their letter asks Prime Minister to reject JRP findings

Vancouver, BC (Tuesday, June 3, 2014) – Scientists from across Canada are asking Prime Minister Harper to reject the findings of the Joint Review Panel (JRP) in the federal decision to approve or reject the Enbridge Northern Gateway Project.

In a letter to the Prime Minister signed by 300 scientists from several nations, including fellows of the Royal Society and Order of Canada holders, they say the JRP's recommendation to approve the oil sands pipeline was based on a "flawed analysis of the risks and benefits to B.C.'s environment and society."

"The JRP report has so many systemic errors and omissions, we—the 300 signatories—can only consider it a failure," says UBC associate professor Kai Chan, who led the initiative with SFU assistant professor Anne Salomon and UBC professor Eric Taylor.

"The report does not provide the guidance the federal government needs to make a sound decision for Canadians about the Northern Gateway Project," Chan says.

The scientists express concerns the Panel omitted important impacts and considered unbalanced, and in some cases, biased evidence that led to a faulty conclusion in its recommendation that Northern Gateway be approved. The JRP assessment, they say:

- Failed to consider important impacts, such as the increased greenhouse gas emissions that could result from oils sands development and burning Northern Gateway oil products in Asia
- Reached conclusions contradicting the government's own scientific evidence, including risks to large whales and other marine species.
- Unjustifiably dismissed the uncertain risks posed by diluted bitumen spills at sea as unimportant risks.
- Relied on an oil spill response plan that is not yet developed
- Relied on information from the proponent, without external evaluation.
- Failed to adequately articulate the rationale for its findings.

The scientists also point to the Panel's failure to provide an explanation of how it had reached its conclusions, especially the central one, that the projects' benefits justify its risks and costs.

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Download the full letter here: http://chanslab.ires.ubc.ca/?attachment_id=2632 (English)

http://chanslab.ires.ubc.ca/?attachment_id=2633 (French)

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