

NEWS RELEASE

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Northwest BC group calls for regional assessment of LNG impacts

(Smithers) The Smithers-based Northwest Institute for Bioregional Research is calling on the provincial and federal governments to assess the regional economic and environmental impacts of liquefied natural gas projects in Northwest B.C.

As of today, there are some dozen LNG projects being promoted in a gold-rush frenzy with no comprehensive assessment of their cumulative effects. Each project is being reviewed by government environmental assessment processes as if none of the other projects existed.

The sheer number of proposals with attendant open houses, government review deadlines, and requirements for detailed public input is completely overwhelming both supporters and doubters of the so-called LNG bonanza.

At the beginning of this month, a letter was submitted on behalf of the group to federal environment minister Leona Aglukkaq, requesting regional study under the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, and B.C. environment minister Mary Polak requesting a Strategic Economic and Environmental Assessment under the BC Environmental Assessment Act.

The Northwest Institute letter is backed by a 63-page report prepared by the University of Victoria's Environmental Law Centre. The report poses a number of questions as to the environmental impact of multiple pipeline routes, the stability of international LNG markets, the potential impact on Canadian gas consumers, and the projects' climate change impacts.

"There are real concerns that B.C. is way behind the energy industry's stampede with no substantial assessment and with no coordinated plan," said Northwest Institute Executive Director, Pat Moss.

"A regional assessment would help determine whether the proposed LNG projects are indeed in the public interest; and if so, identify ways to optimize benefits and minimize negative impacts," said Moss. "It would help ensure the best possible economic and environmental future for all British Columbians."

The letter with report can be downloaded from the Northwest Institute website:
NorthwestInstitute.ca.

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