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## **Gateway project; pipeline to hell** ~ Peter D Carter

Folks in BC have never liked the idea of oil tankers plying their coast. How about 320 per year? How about tankers all the way down the coast from Kitimat to California?

It seems in the euphoria of the Campbell eco-conversion, few people have noticed a BC mega-project which will funnel masses of tar sands oil to the port of Kitimat. From there it will be shipped overseas to the ravenous and still-growing oil markets of Asia and the US, giving them access to the worst oil in the world.

On February 22, it was reported that after a year on hold, the Gateway pipeline project is on. Enbridge has applied to build a twin pipeline capable of shipping over 400,000 barrels of tar sands oil a day. This Calgary company has got investment from Canadian oil corporations and Asian oil refineries to pay for the \$4 billion mega oil pipeline to send tar sands oil west and south. The proposed flood of tar sands oil to China and California depends on the 'Gateway' pipeline.

The twinning of the pipeline is to import natural gas condensate—all the way from Russia. Tar sands operations are running out of natural gas condensate, which is essential to make all that heavy oil flow in order to feed the growing world appetite for oil.

Growing so much, in fact, that global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions are projected to increase 60% by 2030 and 100% by 2050. You might not want to think about what that means.... It means the global climate change problem will be all over. All over because runaway global warming will be unstoppable by 2030 at that rate, whatever we do.

As the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) warned, that would mean the global average temperature would soar to over 6°C by 2100—which should be alarming because 6°C is a threat to the very survival of our species.

The carbon dioxide emitted from all that oil doesn't stop at 2100. It goes on heating for hundreds of years. That's more than enough to end the age of humans, and eventually most life on Earth.

It's no longer just global warming, climate change and climate variation. We are also heating and acidifying the oceans. So much that the ocean carbon sink has started to fail, which means further acceleration of global warming that our

kids will have to cope with—or not.

The Gateway project dwarfs into insignificance the potential environmental benefits of the BC government's global climate change program. It will be the largest pipeline project in North America in 50 years. It will cross at least 1,000 streams, rivers and lakes in BC, a great potential hazard to fish and wildlife. And of course the enormous environmental global climate change implications of all that oil being burned every day in the world's engines are not even being looked at. Those are down-the-line problems that future generations will have to fix and live with — or not.

This makes the Gateway Pipeline a global climate change catastrophe all of its own in the making. If the pipeline is allowed to proceed, the tar sands are expected to double output in just a few years, directly emitting 140 million tonnes of GHGs a year (over double the annual emissions of all the cars and trucks in Canada, according to Greenpeace). But even that would be a drop in the oil bucket compared with all the GHGs emitted when that oil is burned in California and China. Global GHG emissions and atmospheric carbon dioxide levels are currently accelerating faster than ever and are above even the worst case IPCC scenario. That indeed makes *us* an endangered species.

Thanks to the tar sands, Canada is already the largest supplier to the largest greenhouse gas polluter and consumer of oil: our US neighbours. And China's energy bureau says, 'Canada's oil sands projects form a vital piece of the country's energy supplies security strategy for years to come' (University of Alberta China Institute, May 2006). With the Gateway Pipeline, Canada would join the top five oil producers in the world and become one of the very top sources of global GHGs.

The project is essential to Big Oil's plan to double tar sands oil by 2010 and triple it by 2015. By 2012 the tar sands will consume (waste) 2 billion cubic feet of natural gas a day. (That wouldn't be a problem if agriculture didn't depend on natural gas for fertilizers.) The increase in tar sands oil mining will result in up to 3,000 square kilometres of boreal forest cleared, decimating an important carbon sink. The pipeline is projected to come on line as early 2012.

The pipeline (if we let it go ahead) will be challenged going

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over rugged mountain territory, passing north of Prince George to an expanded port facility at Kitimat. A full review conducted by First Nations in May 2006 found that the project should not go ahead because of potentially numerous and serious impacts, of a magnitude that will likely be unacceptable to Carrier Sekani Tribal Council members and communities.

This project will make coastal BC one of the world's major oil terminals shipping oil to Asian markets. The only route now for tar sands oil to Asia is the Kinder Morgan pipeline from Alberta to BC's south coast, which the KM corporation plans to expand. Last year the Kinder Morgan pipeline sent 550,000 barrels of tar sands crude to Asia.

Kinder Morgan operates 26,000 miles of pipelines in America and operates 150 fossil fuel terminals. Its pipelines ship more than 2 million barrels of petrol a day and 7 billion cubic feet of natural gas a day. KM operates the Westbridge Marine Terminal in the Port of Vancouver. This company has quite a record of pipeline oil spills, and in July 2007 a 'massive

spill' from the KM pipeline spilled crude oil into the Burnaby inlet.

The tar sands is already the most destructive project on the planet. It has to be shut down, not expanded. But there should be little trouble in getting new pipelines to the BC coast approved. The National Energy Board (NEB), which gives out the permits, sees lots of money in oil.

According to NEB policy, the Board 'is working very hard to ensure that development in the Canadian public interest moves forward in a timely manner and with regulatory certainty.' They say there is a 'critical need for new pipeline infrastructure.' Obviously the NEB has never heard of greenhouse gases. To our National Energy Board, the 'public interest' means the future can go to hell.

The tar sands legacy, the NEB's legacy—our legacy—will literally be a Hell on Earth if we don't wake up to what accelerating greenhouse gases mean and stop Enbridge's pipeline to oblivion, and BC's collusion in it. - 30 -

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