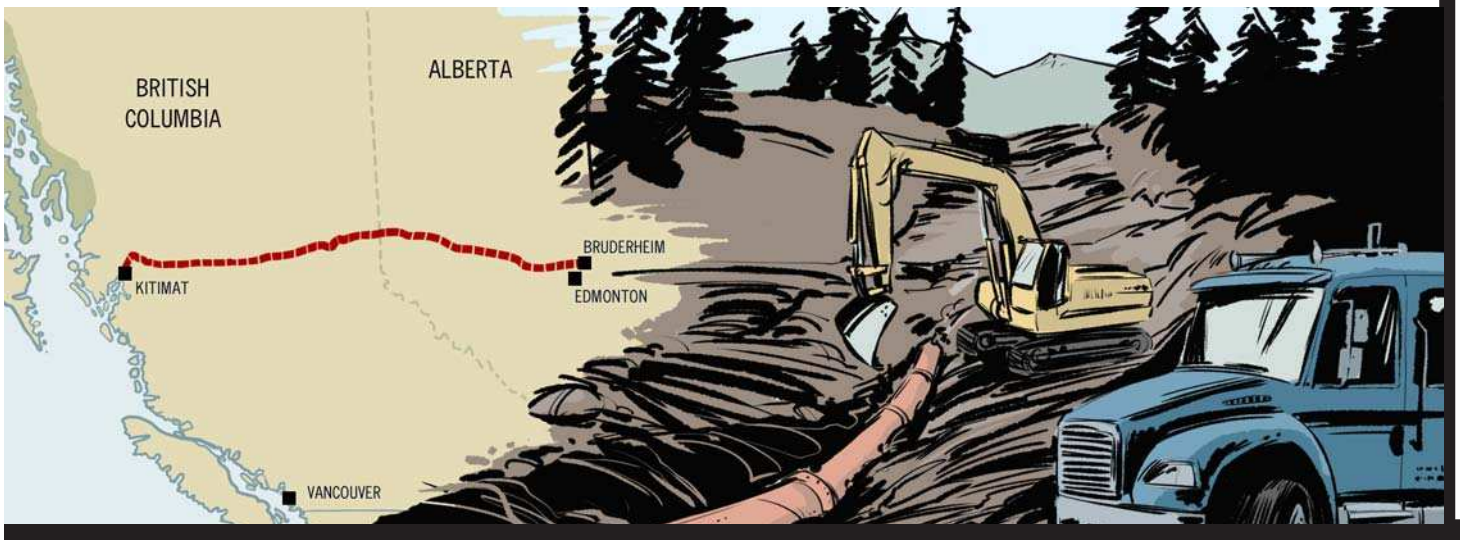




NATIONAL

THE NORTHERN GATEWAY PIPELINE

— ANOTHER OIL PIPELINE CONTROVERSY



On one side? Worried environmentalists and many First Nations. On the opposite side? The federal and Alberta governments as well as those who see a big opportunity for Canada. The hot-button issue is a proposed new pipeline called Northern Gateway.

How hot-button is it? More than 4,300 people signed up to appear before a **Joint Review Panel** (JRP) to debate the project. The hearings began in January and will go on until 2013.

WHAT IS NORTHERN GATEWAY?

Northern Gateway is a \$5.5-billion **venture** that the oil and gas company Enbridge

Inc. is hoping to pursue. It would involve building two pipelines side-by-side to connect Bruderheim, Alberta with Kitimat, B.C.

The pipelines would be 1,177 kilometres long. One would deliver about 525,000 barrels of **bitumen** a day from Alberta's **oil sands** to the B.C. coast. The other would carry some 193,000 barrels per day of a **toxic** natural-gas mixture from Kitimat to Alberta. It would be used to dilute bitumen, making it flow faster.

Northern Gateway also calls for a new marine terminal to be built in Kitimat. About 200 supertankers would dock there

A PIPELINE PRIMER

Pipelines are used to move fuel, such as oil and natural gas, thousands of kilometres to **refineries** near cities and towns.

Canada's pipeline network covers 700,000 kilometres. It extends everywhere except Prince Edward Island and Nunavut. Many of our pipelines originate in Western Canada, where most of the nation's oil is found.

each year to load the oil and take it across the Pacific.

PIPELINE BENEFITS

A pipeline could help Canada sell Alberta oil to Far East nations like China. That's good, say the project's supporters.

DEFINITIONS

BITUMEN: a black, thick form of oil

JOINT REVIEW PANEL: a government-created board that assesses the environmental impact of a project

OIL SANDS: sand and rock mixed with crude bitumen

REFINERIES: factories for purifying natural substances, such as oil

TOXIC: poisonous

VENTURE: a business enterprise involving risk



“Until now, [our] energy resources have flowed just to Canadian **markets** or U.S. markets,” said one industry representative. “There’s always an advantage if [a country] can **enhance** trade relations with a broader group of nations.”

Many agree that the pipeline would bring Canadians real economic benefits. For example, it would create about 3,000 construction jobs and 560 long-term positions. More than 1,000 manufacturing and maintenance jobs would result, too. Some figures indicate that the project could increase Canada’s **Gross Domestic Product** (GDP) by up to \$270 billion.

What’s more, pipelines are the most environmentally-friendly way to transport crude, say those in the industry.

ENVIRONMENTAL RISKS

Still, many people are strongly against the project.

Some don’t want the venture to go ahead because they don’t like oil sands development in general. They say this method

of extracting oil pollutes the air and nearby waterways. The process also harms habitats, produces large amounts of **greenhouse gases** and threatens the health of people who live in the area.

Others are against the proposal because they oppose the pipeline itself. Northern Gateway would travel through the territory of more than 50 First Nations. It would also cross hundreds of rivers and streams, home to salmon and other fish and wildlife.

“The Enbridge pipeline would risk an oil spill into our rivers and lands that would destroy our food supply, our **livelihoods** and our cultures,” said one First Nations Chief in B.C. “Our laws do not permit crude oil pipelines into our territories.”

Another issue? Oil tankers carrying bitumen would have to move through 185 kilometres of inner coastal waters known for high, rough seas. If a major oil spill occurred it could take a terrible toll on the ocean and its creatures.

A RULING NEXT YEAR

Do the pros of the project outweigh the cons? The JRP will release its findings next year. In the meantime, it’s hard to say.

“Of course I’m afraid of an oil spill,” said Kitimat resident Diane Dessureault. “I’m afraid of a car accident, [too]. But do I drive? Yes.” ★

DEFINITIONS

ENHANCE: improve something, or make it more attractive or more valuable

GREENHOUSE GASES: gases that contribute to global warming by trapping heat in the Earth’s atmosphere

GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT: the total value of goods produced and services provided in a country during one year

LIVELIHOOD: something such as work that provides the money that a person needs to live

MARKET: a particular place or group of people that a product is sold to



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ON THE LINES

Answer the following in complete sentences:

1. What are pipelines used for?

2. Describe the extent of Canada's pipeline network.

3. Which company wants to build the Northern Gateway pipeline?

4. Describe this proposed pipeline.

5. List at least two reasons why Northern Gateway supporters say the project should go ahead.

6. List two reasons why some people are opposed to this project.

7. Name the board that will hold hearings and review the project.

8. How long are the hearings expected to last?



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YOUR TASK:

Examine the editorial cartoon by Adrian Raeside. Then, answer the following questions in complete sentences on a separate piece of paper:

1. What do you already know about the Northern Gateway proposal and the Joint Review Panel?
2. Describe the cartoon. Be as specific as possible.
3. According to the caption, who are the creatures in the cartoon?
4. What is your understanding of the term 'stakeholder'?
5. What do you suppose the cartoonist might be saying about the Joint Review Panel?
6. For what reasons do you agree with this point-of-view? For what reasons do you disagree? ★