

FORESTETHICS



 **DOGWOOD**
initiative

Federal Liberal support for B.C. oil tanker ban applauded

Announcement brings B.C. one step closer to a legislated ban

For Immediate Release

June 21, 2010 (Vancouver, B.C.) – Environmental groups are praising Michael Ignatieff and the Liberal Party of Canada for their commitment today to formalize the oil tanker ban in British Columbia. Such a ban would prevent crude oil tankers from traveling through BC’s Central and North Coast.

“Michael Ignatieff’s announcement to formalize the ban on oil tankers is precisely the kind of leadership we need on this issue. We thank him for making the commitment to ensure that the marine life, people, and economy of coastal BC is protected from catastrophic oil spills,” says Jennifer Lash, Executive Director of the Living Oceans Society.

Last month, Enbridge filed its application for the Northern Gateway Pipeline, which would carry tar sands oil to a supertanker port at Kitimat and bring 225 oil tankers per year to B.C.’s North Coast. Environmental groups, including Dogwood Initiative, Forest Ethics, Living Oceans Society, and West Coast Environmental Law Association have been calling for a permanent, legislated ban on crude oil tankers to protect the coast from oil spills.

“The only way we can ensure that the ban on tankers is strong enough to withstand pressure from oil companies is to formalize it through permanent legislation,” says Josh Paterson, Staff Lawyer at West Coast Environmental Law Association. “With today’s announcement, we believe there is enough support among all opposition parties in the House of Commons to make this happen soon. As Liberal leader, Mr. Ignatieff can play a pivotal role in passing legislation to ban tankers.”

Support for a ban on oil tankers has risen since the Gulf of Mexico oil spill. A poll conducted in May 2010 by the Mustel Group showed that 80 percent of British Columbians support a ban on crude oil tankers.

“The images of oil drenching the shorelines from the BP spill have reminded British Columbians how fortunate we are to have an oil-free coast,” stated Nikki Skuce Senior Energy Campaigner at ForestEthics. “With today’s announcement by the Liberal Party of Canada, we are one step closer to giving the people of B.C. what they have wanted for a long time: a legislated ban on oil tankers.”

Coastal First Nations have already declared a ban under their traditional laws on oil tankers in their territorial waters. Federal legislation would demonstrate Parliament’s shared commitment to safeguarding the Pacific. There are currently no crude oil tankers travelling the inside waters of B.C.’s north and central coast.

“In light of the Liberal announcement today, Enbridge should formally withdraw their proposal to build a pipeline to Kitimat,” added Eric Swanson, Corporate Campaigner at the Dogwood Initiative. “It is a waste of time and taxpayers’ money to conduct a review of this project if the will of Parliament is to enact a permanent tanker ban.”

Contacts:

Josh Paterson, Staff Lawyer, West Coast Environmental Law Association: 778-829-8973

Nikki Skuce, Senior Energy Campaigner, ForestEthics: 250-877-7762 or 778-210-0117

Jennifer Lash, Executive Director, Living Oceans Society: 250-741-4006

Eric Swanson, Corporate Campaigner, Dogwood Initiative: 250-370-9930, ext. 27

View maps showing tanker routes and tanker ban zone at:

<http://www.livingoceans.org/media/tanker-route-maps.aspx>