

I would like to begin by wishing everyone a good morning and express my gratitude for having the opportunity to be here today. My name is Zoe Craig and I am here to represent Justice for Girls by expressing my grave concerns about the plan to build the Enbridge Northern Gateway pipeline. I make this submission from my perspective as a 15-year-old Musqueam girl. Justice for Girls is a non-government organization that promotes the health, well-being, and human rights of teen girls. We stand in opposition to the pipe-line because this project threatens children's human rights.

Over the past year, I have watched my television flooded with news, commercials, and protests of the Alberta Oil Sands and the Enbridge pipeline. Because of the controversy surrounding this subject, I decided to do some research of my own. I was fortunate enough to participate in an internship at the David Suzuki Foundation this year in partnership with Justice for Girls, where I studied the connection between the environment and children's, particularly indigenous girls', human rights. Through my research and learning, a common pattern began to develop right before my eyes – Canada sacrificing the environment in favor of our economy. I fear that the Enbridge pipeline will be no exception.

I have many concerns surrounding the development of this pipeline, from Cultural to Environmental. I will begin with what I see as the most pressing human rights matters surrounding this project, before sharing my concerns for the grievances that will haunt us for *generations* should this project be continued.

By allowing the threat of climate change to go unaddressed and by engaging in resource extraction that is not only toxic to local communities but also poses grave risks to the global environment, Canada is in breach of numerous children's rights under the UN *Convention on the Rights of the Child*. Canada is in breach of Article 6 of the *Convention*, a child's right to life, Article 24, a child's right to the highest attainable standard of living, and Article 30, the right of Indigenous children to practice their culture.

As a young Canadian girl, I was shocked to discover Canada's lack of efforts and regress in the international community to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions, including Canada's failure to meet its commitments under the Kyoto Protocol. Canada's Greenhouse Gas emissions have climbed drastically since 1990, defying Canada's goal of a 6 % reduction in greenhouse gas emissions. Instead we have actually increased our emissions by 26% since 1990. The Alberta Oil Sands are the fastest rising source of greenhouse gas emissions in

Canada. In 2009, Canada emitted a whopping 692 million tones of green house gases, 8% of these greenhouse gases came from exploitation of the Tar Sands.

The rapid development of the Tar Sands is devastating not only the air, water, forest, and land in Alberta- it is also poisoning the atmosphere of the entire world. The construction of this pipeline will enable a massive expansion of the Tar Sands, an expansion that the earth as a whole cannot afford. I understand perfectly well the private economic profits that this pipeline would bring to some, but at what cost? The Enbridge pipeline creates profit for a few, and consequences for all. Consider our environment, 1,000 streams and rivers lie in the line of the pipeline, many of which are home for some of Canada's keystone species, such as wild salmon. In addition to the dangerous and intrusive transportation of raw bitumen, which is thicker and more difficult to clean up than the crude oil spilled from the Exxon Valdez, the pipeline would also bring bitumen tankers to our west coast for the very first time. No amount of economic profit can justify this risk to the north coast waters and lands. We must remember, the Great Bear Rainforest- one of the last intact temperate rainforests in the world- is located on BC's north coast, right where the pipeline would finish.

Enbridge's track record should be of utmost concern to all of us, on average a record of one spill every week from Enbridge's pipelines was recorded between 1999-2008. A spill would be devastating to the environment and many First Nations communities.

I am only 15 years old, but I understand that the world has energy needs that must to be met, but I do not believe that this is the correct path for our long-term future. I am not alone in my quest to protect the environment and my future. Many First Nations, including Musqueam, are against having raw bitumen transported in our coastal waters.

The toxins that infect our environment are key factors in environmental degradation and climate change and the mass extraction and transportation of tar sands bitumen will only lead to more severe climate change and environmental degradation. Women and children, particularly girls from poor and indigenous communities, will face disproportionate impacts as a result. The fact that girls and women are hit the hardest by environmental degradation and climate change related disasters is well established and clearly understood by international human rights bodies such as the United Nations. This is why a group of women Nobel laureates toured the pipeline this past fall and concluded that it is especially detrimental to girls and women.¹

Given that Canada does not currently have any National Water or Air Standards; can we really afford to poison our people, land, and animals for the sake of economic profit? Our Air and Water may not seem dirty to you, but there are hundreds of First Nations Communities and Reserves in Canada without running

¹ <http://cnews.canoe.ca/CNEWS/Canada/2012/10/18/20291061.html>

water or on a Boil Water Advisory because of pollutants in the water. Oil and pollutant-infested waters that result from oil extraction would not only add to the health difficulties faced by First Nations peoples living on reserve, but would also threaten our culture.

Currently headlining news worldwide, the 'Idle No More' campaign is extremely relevant. This grassroots protest is partly because of the recent actions by the Harper government to remove protection on thousands of rivers and lakes across the country by gutting the Navigable Waters Act. Water and animal contamination has already had serious affects on many Inuit peoples. The amount of mercury in First Nations peoples of Canada is remarkably higher than that of others. This is because bioaccumulation--the build up of the toxins, in fish and animals-- has become so high, that, for instance Inuit mothers are unknowingly poisoning their babies with their toxic-mercury breast milk. These pollutants are coming from industrial development in the south, thousands of kilometers away. Seeing as our current environmental situation is already in peril, we can not embark on yet another massive industrial project that is known to be toxifying water systems up to 100 kilometers from tar sands extraction sites in Alberta.²

My Musqueam community is also in support of the movement against the Enbridge pipeline. There is a team of young people on the Reservation who are devoted to keeping our streams clean. These volunteers generously donate their time to protect our waters. 13-year-old boys are able to recognize that the environment is sacred, but these children and many like them are being robbed of the planet because of actions like this pipeline. It is evident that citizens from big, to small, are in full support of Mother Earth when it comes to this topic- and it's not hard to understand why. Just ask the people of Kuwait, of Mexico, of the West Indies, the Persian Gulf, of Angola, of South Africa, France and many more. And don't let us be next. Please, protect your children, your grandchildren, and the generations to come.

In light of recent events, Justice for Girls would also like to vocalize our objection to the public being shut out of the hearing room and treated as criminals for attempting to gain access; this affront to democracy is simply unacceptable. Furthermore, this project is not in the public interest, and no terms or conditions would make it such. Listen to the voices of the people, before there aren't any voices to be heard at all. I have done my best, come here and shared my wishes and knowledge, and now I am asking that the panel not recommend approval of this project as to prevent environmental disaster. Please.

² <http://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/story/2013/01/07/pol-oilsands-alberta-lakes-pollution-pah.html>; <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/oil-sands-development-polluting-alberta-lakes-study/article7014184/>

I'm going to leave you with a quote today, spoken by Dr. Jane Goodall at Oxford University, "We do not inherit the Earth from our ancestors; we borrow it from our Children." Because of projects like this pipeline, we are no longer borrowing the Earth from our children, but stealing it.

Thank you.
