

# Nadleh Whut'en First Nation



April 3, 2009

*For Immediate Release*

## **“Our Land is Not for Sale”: Nadleh Whut'en Take Stand on Enbridge Pipeline**

*Nadleh Whut'en Territory/Fort Fraser, BC* - Nadleh Whut'en First Nation invited members from their neighboring Carrier and Sekani First Nations to learn more about the impacts of the proposed Enbridge Northern Gateway Pipeline yesterday. Elders, Hereditary Leaders, Youth and other members voiced concerns over the environmental impacts and the failure of the environmental assessment process to address Aboriginal rights and title.

“We have provided independent non-biased information to our members and neighbours, and we have heard loud and clear that we cannot risk the health of our land and future generations for short-term financial gain,” said Chief Larry Nooski.

Nadleh Whut'en invited presenters from the Pembina Institute, West Coast Environmental Law, and the Office of the Wet'suwet'en to provide information on environmental impacts and the environmental assessment and consultation process proposed by the federal government. In addition to learning about the potential impacts to Carrier Sekani territories, delegates also learned about the tanker traffic and oil sands development associated with the proposed pipeline.

“We stand behind the First Nations who are speaking out against the health and environmental impacts of the oil sands, we lend our hand in friendship and unity to the Fort Chipewyan and other First Nations affected by the oil sands,” said Nadleh Hereditary Chief George George Jr. “We are now planning to send a delegation to tour the oil sands and meet with the affected First Nations.”

The proposed Enbridge Northern Gateway pipeline would transport oil and condensate across unceded Carrier Sekani lands between Kitimat, BC and the Alberta oil sands. Nadleh Whut'en has voiced concerns to both Enbridge and the federal government over the lack of a legitimate process to address Aboriginal rights and title, and has proposed a parallel First Nations Review Process with other First Nations along the pipeline and tanker route.

“Our land has not been surrendered to the Crown. Enbridge seems to think that all they need is approval from the federal government, but we want to be clear that this project will not proceed without the free, prior, and informed consent of our people,” said Chief Nooski.

Free, prior and informed consent is an international standard for development on unceded Indigenous lands, protected under the United Nations Declaration on Indigenous Rights. Canada is in the minority of countries that have *not* signed on to support and adopt this declaration.

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## BACKGROUND

### A TIMELINE ON CARRIER SEKANI FIRST NATIONS AND THE PROPOSED ENBRIDGE NORTHERN GATEWAY PIPELINE

JANUARY-OCTOBER 2006: Carrier Sekani Tribal Council (of which Nadleh Whut'en is a member) calls on the federal government to discuss a parallel First Nations Review Process as a means to address Aboriginal rights and title in the environmental assessment of the proposed pipeline. The federal government refuses to discuss alternatives to their Joint Review Panel process.

MAY 2006: Nadleh Whut'en, along with the seven other nations of the Carrier Sekani Tribal Council release the *Aboriginal Interests and Use Study on the Proposed Enbridge Gateway Pipeline*. The study details the potential impacts and benefits of the pipeline, and concludes that the environmental risks outweigh the limited benefits of the project. The report calls for an improved decision-making process that ensures the free, prior and informed consent of First Nations.

SEPTEMBER 2006: The federal government releases their Draft Joint Review Panel Agreement on the Enbridge Gateway Pipeline without consultation with affected First Nations.

OCTOBER 2006: The Carrier Sekani Tribal Council launches a court challenge against the federal government on the failure to consult on the Draft Joint Review Panel Agreement.

NOVEMBER 2006: Enbridge announces a delay of the Gateway pipeline of 2-4 years citing a shift in priority to other oil consumer markets.

JUNE 2008: Enbridge reinitiates the Gateway pipeline and the federal government begins consultation on their Draft Joint Review Panel Agreement.

NOVEMBER 2008: Nadleh Whut'en joins forces with the Haida, Nak'azdli and Wet'suwet'en First Nations to release a statement on the environmental impacts of the pipeline, and call for an environmental review process that protects Aboriginal rights and title. The First Nations Summit passes a resolution calling on the federal government to cease the Joint Review Panel until an agreement is reached with the affected First Nations.

DECEMBER 2008: Nadleh Whut'en proposes a community-driven environmental review process with Enbridge that ensures the free, prior and informed consent of Nadleh Whut'en people in order for the pipeline to proceed. Enbridge refuses to discuss any process outside of the federal environmental review process.

JANUARY 2009: Nadleh Whut'en writes the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency to request a meeting to discuss a parallel First Nations Review Process for the Enbridge pipeline. The Agency responds that there will be "no separate process" and refuses to discuss this option with Nadleh Whut'en.

MARCH 2009: Carrier Sekani First Nations learn of the higher than normal rates of cancer in First Nations communities affected by the Alberta oil sands, following the release of an Alberta Cancer Board study.

APRIL 2009: Nadleh Whut'en invites its neighboring Carrier Sekani First Nation members to learn more about the Northern Gateway pipeline, the tie to the Alberta oil sands, tanker traffic, and the consultation and environmental assessment process.