

Historic Environmental Agreement on LNG Project Signed with First Nations



Federal and provincial Ministers, and representatives of First Nations recently announced the signing of an historic agreement on the environmental monitoring of the proposed Pacific NorthWest LNG Project. The agreement is the first of its kind between the federal government, the government of BC, the Lax Kw'alaams Band and the Metlakatla First Nation.

The Pacific NorthWest LNG Project involves the development of a liquefied natural gas (LNG) terminal and associated infrastructure within the asserted traditional territories of the Lax Kw'alaams and Metlakatla First Nations, collectively known as the Coast Tsimshian.

The project received federal environmental assessment approval in Sept. 2016, subject to more than 190 legally-binding conditions. The Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency and BC Environmental Assessment Office remain responsible for ensuring ongoing compliance with their respective legally-binding conditions for the project.

Through this agreement, First Nations will work directly with provincial and federal authorities as part of a committee to ensure the project is developed in the most environmentally sustainable way possible. The environmental monitoring committee will:

- Enable enhanced environmental oversight of the project and the active engagement of local First Nations
- Foster information-sharing and continuous environmental monitoring and oversight
- Enable the Lax Kw'alaams Band and Metlakatla First Nation to provide input into the project's environmental management plans and follow-up programs.

The cooperative agreement sets out the principles, structure, and roles and responsibilities of the environmental monitoring committee. The committee's purpose is to ensure that oversight of environmental and compliance monitoring, management plans and follow-up program requirements is undertaken in a coordinated and collaborative manner. It will be supported by a coordinating Technical Committee and three general types of monitoring groups, including an independent environmental monitor.

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