

NEWS RELEASE

Federal government decision to nix the Northern Gateway pipeline provokes uncertainty on Aboriginal consultation process

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

VANCOUVER, NOVEMBER 29, 2016 – The BC Chamber of Commerce is disappointed in the federal government’s refusal to move forward on the Northern Gateway pipeline project.

“It’s disheartening to see this outcome, given the tremendous effort by Enbridge to ensure it followed all the right steps to get the project to ‘yes’,” said Val Litwin, president and CEO of the BC Chamber of Commerce. “Unfortunately, the project collapsed under a glaring lack of clarity on how to adequately consult with First Nations, and it’s important to recognize that Enbridge is not at all to blame for the project getting axed.”

Litwin said that while the BC Chamber fully supports the government’s efforts to protect the environment, today’s decision provokes a troubling ambiguity in how to properly conduct Aboriginal consultation, which could undermine the competitiveness of Canada’s natural resource industry.

“The Federal Court of Appeal sent a clear message to the federal government by ruling it had failed to uphold its duty to consult with Indigenous peoples,” said Litwin. “But, instead of doubling back to meet those requirements, the government has put a full-stop on the project, which is not only unfair to Enbridge and its 31 First Nations equity partners, it plunges the resource development sector into even greater uncertainty around how to build relationships with Indigenous peoples and move projects forward.”

Many Indigenous communities and the private sector are successfully working together on resource development projects. This relationship could be a tremendous competitive advantage to Canada’s resource industry, but government needs to get the framework right.

“We must be constantly mindful that inefficient and unpredictable processes can turn away potential investors,” Litwin said. “With an economy that increasingly depends on private-sector development, we must tighten our focus on aggressively welcoming top-tier projects so that we land the investment dollars we need.”



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The BC Chamber of Commerce is the largest and most broadly-based business organization in the province. Representing more than 125 Chambers of Commerce and 36,000 businesses of every size, sector and region of the province, the BC Chamber of Commerce is “The Voice of Business in BC.”

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