

# Press Release

## United Church Categorically Rejects Northern Gateway Pipeline

**Toronto:** The 41st General Council has instructed Nora Sanders, The United Church of Canada's General Secretary, to make a public statement "categorically" rejecting construction of the Enbridge Northern Gateway Pipeline, which has a proposed route stretching from northern Alberta to Kitimat, British Columbia.

Due to the timely nature of the pipeline review hearings, commissioners asked that this be accomplished soon. In addition, Sanders has been asked to communicate this decision to all courts of the church, the governments of Canada, Alberta, and British Columbia, Enbridge, and all Canadians through media outlets.

Initiated by the Native Ministries Council of British Columbia Conference, the proposal was brought forward to this Council meeting by the All Native Circle Conference. The decision was made by Council delegates meeting in one of three decision-making bodies called commissions on August 14.

According to Jim White of British Columbia Conference, one of the biggest environmental concerns is the size of the ships required to transport the crude oil to China. He said super oil tankers are expected to be much larger than the Exxon Valdez, a ship that ran aground and spilled oil in the waters near Alaska in 1989. He said his community is fearful about another possible spill and the environmental damage that would result.

Ray Jones, Chair of the British Columbia Native Ministries Council, said the current federal government is doing everything it can to make sure this pipeline goes through. The oil and natural resources will not benefit Aboriginal people, he said, because the oil is being moved offshore to be refined. In terms of environmental issues, he explained that the waters around Kitimat are very treacherous in terms of weather and geography.

In the background material to the proposal, commissioners were told that the British Columbia Native Ministries Council spent considerable time visiting and speaking with church leaders, Aboriginal Elders, and congregation members on the specific issue of the pipeline and its current review by a Joint Review Panel mandated by the federal Minister of the Environment and the National Energy Board of Canada.

### For further information:

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