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Reprint from Volume 14 Number 3

February 14, 2002

## **GSX Panel revises List of Issues**

The NEB/CEAA Joint Review Panel for the proposed Georgia Strait gas pipeline has clarified its original List of Issues to include many of the environmental issues raised during a series of public meetings in January. The Panel has added the need for adequate government consultation with, and consideration of the impact on, First Nations, and the adequacy of financial arrangements for construction, operation, and decommissioning of the proposed pipeline, as well as failures, malfunctions, and accidents. The Panel decided not to include concerns with the existing Centra Gas system, the potential privatization of BC Hydro, regional taxation, and issues pertaining to landowner compensation.

The Panel's List of Issues now clearly includes a wide range of environmental and feasibility issues, raised by intervenors and members of the public during the January meetings. Some examples:

- the purpose of, need for, and alternatives to the project would be considered in the course of comparative evaluation of the environmental impact of the proposal, and whether a proposed project meets the 'public convenience and necessity test'
- transboundary environmental effects, from parts of the project on the US side of the line, could be considered
- the effect of trade agreements on the supply of gas which, after all, is routed through the US.
- a wide variety of marine environmental considerations, including underwater noise from construction and operation,

and its effects on the communication of whales and dolphins

- the Panel noted that it had been urged to adopt the Precautionary Principle when dealing with environmental issues
- issues relating to the use of Horizontal Directional Drilling at the Manley Creek landfall on Vancouver Island
- effect of pipeline construction and operation on aquifers
- responsibility for, and response to, accidents and malfunctions; safety aspects
- project financing, the corporate structure of the applicant, and financial arrangements with related parties
- activities and management in the 30 metre safety zone
- the remote location of the operations centre in the US and the absence of Project staff on Vancouver Island; emergency response planning

### **The Panel added to the List of Issues:**

- the Crown's obligation to consult with First Nations
- the effect of the pipeline on First Nations activities and communities
- the ability of the applicant to deal with financial liabilities; this would include consideration of insurance, liability, and risk management on a long term basis.

The Panel is also seeking advice on whether it should consider issues related to the environmental impact of the proposed electrical generating stations for which the pipeline is being built (see related story, page 1). ☞

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*'This article was published (February 14, 2002) in 'Island Tides', an independent, regional newspaper distributing across the Southern Strait of Georgia from Tsawwassen to Victoria to Nanaimo.'*

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