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News from the front lines of LNG - Patrick Brown

Pacific NorthWest LNG has proposed constructing an LNG plant on Lelu Island, less than a couple of miles from Port Edward. Ship loading facilities are to be built close to Flora Bank, where flourishing eelgrass beds nurture juvenile salmon for the Skeena River run.

The project has not received federal environmental approval. However, BC's environmental authorities have approved it, and Premier Christy Clark has been an enthusiastic booster, and engineered a special legislative session last summer to ratify an 'Agreement in Principle' with NorthWest. The project is backed by Malaysian government-owned Petronas.

On January 23, some 300 First Nations hereditary and elected chiefs, scientists, and fishermen from the headwaters of the Skeena river to the ocean finished off a two-day 'Salmon Nation Summit' by declaring Lelu Island, and the Flora and Agnew Banks 'off limits' to LNG development. The 'Lelu Declaration' also received the backing of Bulkley Valley MP Nathan Cullen, and three MLAs: Jennifer Rice (North Coast), Robin Austin (Skeena), and Doug Donaldson (Stikine).

On January 28 it was reported that one of two crab-fishing boats, looking for crabs near Flora Bank, was rammed at high speed by a Northwest LNG contractor vessel, *Glacial Mist*, in an attempt to discourage them from fishing. *Glacial Mist*

reportedly had three private security guards aboard.

Previous ramming incidents were reported on October 28, 2015, and January 19, 2016.

Local First Nations set up a protest camp on Lelu Island last summer.

On Monday, February 15, a new documentary film, *A Last Stand for Lelu*, will be shown as part of the Vancouver International Mountain Film Festival. The documentary *Fractured Land* played at the UNBC Weldwood Theatre in Prince George on January 27.

The All Native Basketball Tournament attracted financial contributions from a number of corporations involved in the gas production business. Because of this sponsorship, it also attracted criticism and boycott by First Nations families.

Meanwhile, back in Malaysia, a \$700 million scandal envelops the government and the Prime Minister, who appears to control Petronas. Business news organization Bloomberg called it 'The scandal that ate Malaysia'. It is being investigated by US authorities. The government relies on dividends from Petronas to balance the national budget. This could affect NorthWest's ability to finance its planned \$36 billion investment in BC's LNG. 🐦

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