

**Energy East project : Environmental groups call upon TransCanada to clarify its intentions and request suspension of the NEB hearing process**

Montreal, February 11 2015 – The Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society (CPAWS), the David Suzuki Foundation, Fondation Rivières, Greenpeace, Nature Québec, the Quebec Environmental Law Centre (CQDE) and the World Wildlife Fund Canada (WWF-Canada) reacted to the TransCanada’s refusal to drop its tanker terminal plans in Cacouna and called upon the company to clarify its intentions regarding its projects in Quebec. The environmental groups requested the immediate suspension of the National Energy Board (NEB) hearing process as long as the oil company hasn’t given all the facts and asked the Quebec government to support them in their position, reminding the cabinet that TransCanada still has not submitted a complete proper impact study of its pipeline project, which is necessary to mandate the BAPE for its own review of Energy East.

“Until TransCanada clarifies its intentions regarding its tanker terminal project in Quebec, the NEB hearings cannot go forward,” said Patrick Bonin, a Climate and Energy campaigner at Greenpeace Canada. “The company refuses to admit that the Cacouna terminal project is dead and that there is no plan B. The company is trying to buy time and save face among its stakeholders.”

According to Christian Simard from Nature Québec, “the oil company should reconsider its positions and show more transparency by revealing its real intentions behind its project in Quebec. The company should stop showing disregard to Quebecers and give us the real facts”. The environmental groups reiterate that TransCanada still hasn’t complied with the seven conditions that were requested by the Quebec government and has not submitted the complete impact study in French, which is necessary for a BAPE review.

**Suspension of NEB hearings**

The environmental groups consider that the Energy East pipeline project will change significantly after TransCanada drops plans to build a tanker terminal at Cacouna, which requires immediate suspension of NEB hearing process.

“Dropping plans in Cacouna will have a significant impact on the pipeline route, on the people who are directly affected by it as well as on the expert assessment on the project. It would be unfair to keep the same deadlines for the NEB public hearing process, especially since many crucial aspects of the project remain in a state of uncertainty”, said Karine Pelofy from the CQDE.

“TransCanada must confirm it has abandoned its plans in Cacouna and concede that such a platform cannot be built without having a great impact on the beluga population. Considering the fragile ecosystem of the region, which is already subject to intense pressures, we believe that the company should drop its plan to build a tanker terminal in the St-Lawrence River”, declared Karel Mayrand from the David Suzuki Foundation.

The David Suzuki Foundation, CPAWS-Quebec and WWF-Canada released today a [major study](#) on the cumulative impact of oil transportation projects on the St-Lawrence River, its ecosystem and local communities. The study shows that these projects pose additional and unnecessary risks to communities and the ecosystem.

### **Federal obligations**

“The beluga whale has been designated as an endangered species since 2004”, notes Marie-Claude Lemieux, WWF Canada's Director for Quebec. “It is time for the government to formally designate its habitat as essential in order to protect it. Furthermore, we call upon Ottawa to implement the species recovery strategy that was adopted by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans in 2012”, added Mrs. Lemieux.

Last fall, environmental groups won an injunction to suspend exploratory drilling in Cacouna, on the south shore of the St. Lawrence River, over potential dangers to the beluga whale population. The applicant groups are the CPAWS, the CQDE, Nature Québec, the David Suzuki Foundation and France Dionne and Pierre Béland. Although they were not party to the litigation, Fondation Rivières, Greenpeace and WWF-Canada supported the initiative.

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