

## **Major unions endorse mass sit-in to defend Canada's west coast from tar sands pipelines and tankers**

### **For Immediate Release**

**Monday, September 24, 2012** (Vancouver) — Today, the Communications Energy and Paperworkers Union (CEP), the Canadian Autoworkers Union (CAW), the BC Teachers' Federation, the United Fisherman and Allied Workers' Union-CAW, and the Canadian Union of Public Employees BC (CUPE BC) have all added their names to the growing list endorsing the October 22 Defend Our Coast mass sit-in against tar sands tankers and pipelines in Victoria.

"More than 50 BC communities have said 'no' to these tar sands export pipelines and the tanker traffic they will bring to BC's pristine coastline," said CUPE BC President Barry O'Neill. "That's along with 132 First Nations, and thousands of working people right across Canada who say no. CUPE BC stands with them all, and we're very proud to support this action."

"The students in our classrooms are keenly aware of environmental issues, and they are demanding that we adults do our part to ensure that the world they inherit is clean, healthy and sustainable. We all have a responsibility to take a stand for our children and grandchildren," said Susan Lambert, president of the BC Teachers' Federation.

On September 12, over 80 influential leaders from the business, First Nations, environmental, labour, academic, medical and artistic communities endorsed the sit-in at the provincial legislature. The sit-in will highlight the widespread opposition in B.C. and across Canada to tar sands pipelines and the threat they pose to coastal ecosystems and inland watersheds on unceded First Nations territories.

"The on-going risks that these tar sands pipelines and tankers pose aren't worth any price. Tens of thousands of unionized and other jobs depend on healthy river and ocean ecosystems," said Susan Spratt CAW Area Director for BC and AB. "On October 22<sup>nd</sup> we will be standing in solidarity with thousands of working people in BC and our First Nations sisters and brothers."

The October 22 sit-in builds on the success of previous protests against tar sands expansion and pipeline projects in the U.S. and Canada: the August 2011 sit-ins in Washington D.C. that helped delay approval of the Keystone XL pipeline and the September 2011 sit-in in Ottawa that helped put Canadian tar sands pipeline proposals in the national spotlight.

"We will be coming to Victoria not just to oppose Harper's vision of an economy based on exporting raw bitumen but to propose a very different economic vision for our country. We want a transition from dependence on fossil fuels that is fair to the workers in the sector, as well as a national energy strategy that includes good green jobs and long term energy security to Canadians," asserted Jim Britton, Regional Vice President, CEP.

People can sign up online at <http://www.defendourcoast.ca> to participate and become a coastal defender.

- 30 -

For more information please contact:

**Susan Spratt, Western Regional Director, Canadian Auto Workers union**

604-657-4303

spratts@caw.ca

**Nancy Knickerbocker, Media relations officer, British Columbia Teachers' Federation**

604.340.1959

nknickerbocker@bctf.ca

**Karen Cooling, Communications, Canadian Energy and Paperworkers Union**

604-790-8890

kcooling@cep.ca

**Clay Suddaby, Communications, Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE)**

604-313-1138.

csuddaby@cupe.ca