

From:

Pauquachin First Nation
Tsartlip First Nation
Tsawout First Nation
Tseycum First Nation

Media Release

Tuesday March 1, 2016

W̱SÁNEĆ First Nations oppose Malahat LNG

W̱SÁNEĆ Territory – The Chiefs of the W̱SÁNEĆ First Nations located on the Saanich Peninsula (Pauquachin, Tsartlip, Tsawout, Tseycum) stand together and publically announce their opposition to the Malahat LNG project proposed by Steelhead LNG (the “proponent”) and Malahat First Nation.

Our Nations are the successor Nations and beneficiaries of the rights recognized and confirmed by the Treaty of 1852 with the Crown. The Treaty provides unqualified protection and recognition of our right to carry on our fisheries as formerly. This is confirmed by every level of court in BC over many decades. Any permit or authorization that has been provided to date to the proponent is invalid.

The National Energy Board export license was issued last year to the proponent without even notice to us, let alone engagement seeking our consent. We stand together to also put the government of British Columbia on notice that they do not have jurisdiction to interfere with the continuity of our treaty rights and will incur liability and put any LNG project at significant risk of cancellation should they choose to provide permits and authorizations to the proponents without our consent.

Due to recent meetings with the proponent and media reports that they are committed to advancing their proposal, the W̱SÁNEĆ Chiefs must express that we are **opposed** to the proposed floating liquefied natural gas terminal, the proposed sub-sea gas pipeline or the proposed shipping activity in the Saanich Inlet.

The proponent has neither requested nor have they been granted permission to explore their proposal. The proponent does not have the consent to operate in our territory and must cease operations immediately.

The Saanich Inlet has been our home for thousands of years. The Inlet is a critical source of food, recreation and ceremony. The mountains that surround the Saanich Inlet are our sacred places. Past industrial activity damaged the Inlet and we celebrate the signs of recovery over the past few years.

Quotes from W̱SÁNEĆ Leadership

Chief Rebecca David - Pauquachin

“Pauquachin does not agree with the Steelhead LNG project and will not provide consent to any progress of LNG plans within the territory or otherwise. Pauquachin will continue to stand united with the W̱SÁNEĆ Leadership and advocate the protection of our sacred water and land, as both are considered invaluable,” said Rebecca Harris, Chief of Pauquachin First Nation. “We need to remember that every decision we make today effects the next 7 generations. This message is out of respect for our beloved ancestors and future children. There will be no LNG project as far as Pauquachin stands.”

Chief Don Tom - Tsartlip

“Steelhead LNG's proposed floating LNG facility is reckless and dangerous. This project would kill all our efforts to rehabilitate the Saanich inlet over the last 2 decades,” said Don Tom, Chief of Tsartlip First Nation. “Our way of life to hunt and carry on our fisheries as formerly is protected by the 1852 pre-confederation Treaty and the realization of such a reckless proposal would directly infringe our protected rights under the Treaty. Steelhead LNG and its Board of Directors have squandered every opportunity to meaningfully meet with Tsartlip.”

Chief Harvey Underwood - Tsawout

“I am in full support of the stand that the W̱SÁNEĆ Chiefs are taking in opposing LNG in the Saanich Inlet. We need to protect our environment,” said Harvey Underwood, Chief of Tsawout First Nation.

Chief Tanya Jimmy - Tseycum

“Today we work together in spirit for the right reasons for our future, this land is not for sale, there is no relationship of neighbours, seeking consent after the fact doesn't work, said Tanya Jimmy,” Chief of Tseycum First Nation. “We answer for Mother Earth as the warriors of the land.”

Grand Chief Steward Phillip – Union of BC Indian Chiefs

“Despite the crystal clear and consistently repeated opposition to the Malahat LNG project expressed by the W̱SÁNEĆ Nations, Steelhead LNG has continued to aggressively pursue their proposal anyway,” said Grand Chief Stewart Phillip of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs. “It appears Steelhead has the full support of Premier Christy Clark and this B.C. Liberal government as they arrogantly drive ahead their proposal in a beautifully rich territory they care not one iota about. Steelhead LNG has demonstrated a total lack of respect for the W̱SÁNEĆ territory and as a result the W̱SÁNEĆ Nations have rightfully told them to cease, desist and leave. I stand with the W̱SÁNEĆ Nations as they exercise their inherent rights, indigenous laws and stewardship responsibilities to their territory for future generations to enjoy.”

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