ST'ÁT'IMC CHIEFS COUNCIL



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FOR THE SALMON: ST'ÁT'IMC CHIEFS COUNCIL LAUNCHES LEGAL CHALLENGE TO PACIFIC LINK CRUDE OIL PIPELINE APPROVAL

(St'át'imc Territory) Today, the St'át'imc Chiefs Council (SCC) joined several other impacted Nations who have announced Federal Court legal challenges to the federal government's approval of the Pacific Link crude oil pipeline and tankers project under the *Building Canada Act* (BCA, Bill C-5).

The Chiefs say that the decision to list Pacific Link as a "national interest" project – a step that legally shifts any future consultation to "how" not "whether" the project will proceed – was made in an unlawful and unconstitutional manner, without any impact assessment or consultation with SCC, despite potentially devastating impacts on Fraser River wild salmon upon which their title, rights, culture, food sovereignty and traditions hinge.

"The proposed Pacific Link pipeline and tankers project will cross over 500 rivers and streams, including two new proposed Fraser River crossings, and together with other expansion plans, is expected to double crude oil tanker traffic in the Salish Sea," said Kukpi7 Justin Kane, SCC Chair. "The threat of an oil spill affecting Fraser River salmon, our fishing rights and our way of being, is heinous. Yet this project was approved under the BCA without any impact assessment at all, and without any consultation with the St'át'imc Nation as a whole."

Dozens of First Nations who rely on Fraser River wild salmon and hold inherent fishing rights potentially impacted by the new crude oil pipeline and tankers project – throughout the Fraser Watershed and the ocean migration routes of Fraser River salmon – were skipped over in the inadequate and rushed process leading to the federal government's approval of Pacific Link project on October 1, 2026.

"Since time immemorial the St'át'imc have been connected to Fraser River wild salmon and the rivers that are deeply rooted between the people, culture, our Nxekmenlhkálha múta7 nt'ákmenlhkalha (St'át'imc laws and our way of life), language and the land, governed and managed according to our laws," said St'át'imc Elder Kukwpi7 Art Adolph.

"The collusion of the federal and provincial governments along with a few industry and corporate elites, who cloak themselves as economic saviours, will force First Nations further into third-world conditions contributed to by the extinction of the Fraser River wild salmon and the collapse of First Nations' culture and traditions relating to wild salmon. That is why we have filed this court case challenging the Pacific Link project approval," said Adolph.

In 2010, the St'át'imc determined that the risk of a crude oil pipeline and tanker project in the Fraser Watershed was too great given the cumulative impacts of past, present and future development and climate change on Fraser River salmon. Along with other Nations, the St'át'imc co-drafted and launched the Save the Fraser Declaration, an Indigenous law ban on tar sands oil pipelines like Pacific Link from the Fraser Watershed and the ocean migration routes of Fraser River salmon. The Declaration was eventually signed by representatives of over 100 First Nations.

"This plan to transport another million barrels of crude oil a day through the watershed is extremely risky," said Kukpi7 Bonnie Adolph. "The health of Fraser River salmon has only worsened over the past two decades. Approving the Pacific Link project without a full cumulative effects assessment of the risks to salmon and fishing rights, and without deep consultation to ensure the consent of all impacted Nations, is simply unacceptable, and unlawful."

By listing the project under the BCA, the Pacific Link project is now "deemed" to have met all legal requirements for its approval under federal environmental laws like the *Fisheries Act* and *Species At Risk Act* regardless of actual impacts on fish and fishing rights. Further, in September 2026 the federal government removed pipelines entirely from the list of projects that must be assessed under the *Impact Assessment Act*. These structural issues compromise any future consultation on project conditions, say the chiefs, and can't rectify the Crown's legal errors in the BCA listing decision, which must be set aside to allow full assessment and consultation on the project to occur.

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To arrange media interviews / media contacts:
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St'át'imc Chiefs Council: The St'át'imc Chiefs Council is the unified government of the St'át'imc rooted in Nxekmenlhkálha múta7 nt'ákmenlhkalha (St'át'imc laws and our way of life). The St'át'imc Nation is made up of eleven communities, N'Quátqua, Samáhquam, Sekw'el'wás, Skatin, T'ít'q'et, Ts'kw'áylaxw, Xáx'tsa, Xáxli'p, Tsal'álh, Xwísten, and Líl'wat Nation.