

Face to Face with the Enemy

An Introduction to the WCCGT pipeline, PRGT pipeline and Ksi Lisims LNG

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Many have stood by as our Wet'suwet'en friends and neighbours have for decades resisted development in their territories, in the process participating in and witnessing inspiring moments of resistance against multiple pipelines and now most recently the Coastal Gaslink line. With heavy hearts we have fought back against the land being destroyed and witnessed the state invade with hundreds of officers, emergency response teams, helicopters, drones, dogs and a wide variety of weaponry. It's clear that those who view life from above, who plot pipelines through sacred waters and traditional and culturally significant areas, will stop at nothing in their pursuit of these mega-projects. Acknowledging the ever-expanding reach of the mega-machine means that no place will go untouched from these capitalist and colonial logics.

On neighbouring Gitksan territories this feels particularly relevant as two pipeline projects currently loom in their early stages of development. This article will briefly introduce both projects, and share a few thoughts about what they could mean for the area. Because of the early stages that both of these projects are currently in, their details are evolving quickly, but one thing remains clear: they must be opposed and stopped as soon as possible. As these billion dollar projects gain more momentum they will snowball, becoming more economically appealing for those who seek to destroy the earth and our lives for profit.

West Coast Connector Gas Transmission (WCCGT)

The WCCGT natural gas pipeline project is planned to begin in northeast BC, and stretches 872km to to a yet to be built export facility near Prince Rupert. If the self-appointed masters of this world find it commercially viable, the proposed route could include a second adjacent line. On Gitksan territories this pipeline would carry liquid natural gas across both the Skeena and Kispiox rivers, which are critical sources of food and water for many in the region. Some in the area drink water straight from the river and their lives literally depend on it; for many Gitksan folks in the area the rivers and the salmon that travel them have immense cultural importance and serve as key subsistence source for both them and local non-native communities. Beyond Gitksan territories the line would cross hundreds of streams and dozens of rivers, notably including the Nass and Babine within the territories of the Nisga' and Nadut'en. All of these river systems are integral to salmon populations.

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The line, along with the plan to one day twin it, received its environmental assessment certificate in 2014 and has recently received another 5-year extension. This project sat relatively dormant for its first few years due to falling LNG prices globally, and difficulties faced in building an export facility capable of getting the gas onto tanker ships. Fierce resistance around the proposed export facility on Lelu Island, which was occupied and defended from development by Tsimshian and non native land defenders for more than a year, meant that there was no final destination for the line. This is in the process of changing with a potential new terminal Ksi Lisims LNG (introduced at the end of this piece).

With the merger of Spectra Energy and Enbridge in 2017 the project is now wholly in Enbridge's hands. Enbridge is a multinational company and operates more than 65,000km of pipelines across North America. They are responsible for the largest inland oil spill in North America, spilling 7.7 million litres in the Mississippi river in 1991.

In an effort to prepare for construction in the region, Enbridge is trying to finalize the details of their route with on-ground and aerial helicopter surveying, which have been ongoing since the spring. We can expect for this activity to continue throughout the fall as they attempt to finalize the project's route.

Prince Rupert Gas Transmission (PRGT)

The PRGT line is a proposed 900 km pipeline that is scheduled to deliver LNG from near Hudson's Hope to a facility near Prince Rupert, B.C.. This line has faced fierce resistance on Gitksan and Tsimshian territories which culminated with the cancellation of the Petronas terminal on Lelu Island at the mouth of the Skeena river after more than a year of occupation and conflict on the sea.

In 2014 on Gitksan territories, Luutkudziiwus house territory was reoccupied and Madii Lii camp was created in the path of the PRGT pipeline. Together a fight on two different fronts and crashing LNG prices globally meant this project lost its momentum.

Nonetheless all the permits and approvals obtained by TC Energy for the PRGT line still exist, which means that at any moment this line could spring back into action. The project is missing an export facility on the coast capable of loading LNG onto tankers, though this could change with recent momentum behind construction of a facility on the coast. Delays and potential failures to construct other lines in the region (CGL and WCCGT) could put more urgency to reignite the PRGT project; simultaneously, it's also possible that success in construction of other lines and their accompanying Ksi Lisims LNG export facility could embolden investors', developers' and the state's confidence in forcing mega-projects through the region. With Russia scaling back LNG exports to global markets as the war in Ukraine continues we are seeing sharp increase in demand and price of LNG globally. This makes these dead end projects more desirable the to vultures of this world.

Ksi Lisims LNG

The Nisga'a Nation's government is partnering with a group of Western Canadian natural gas producers called Rockies LNG Partners and a Texas-based energy company called Western LNG. Together they plan to build a floating LNG liquefaction facility which would provide WCCGT and/or PRGT lines an end point near the village of Gingolx, a coastal community about 80 kilometres north of Prince Rupert. Up to 12 million tonnes of LNG from these lines would be liquefied and loaded onto tankers bound for foreign markets. This project is dependent on either/both Enbridge's WCCGT and TC Energy's PRGT lines to provide it LNG and the aforementioned lines are dependent on Ksi Lisims LNG to reach global markets. With this in mind the capacity to fight these mega projects on multiple fronts will be important.

It's clear that we will increasingly find ourselves face to face with the enemy and should take these precious moments to strengthen our communities, our capacity to care for one another, and our ability to act. Our abilities to produce the worlds we want, and to destroy the ones that we don't, will be the defining skill sets of our lives.

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