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U.S. COAST GUARD REVIEWING B.C. OIL EXPORT PLANS

Concerns south of the border over oil tanker traffic from British Columbia have spurred a U.S. Coast Guard review of proposed increases in Canadian oil exports.

A legislative amendment proposed by Washington state Sen. Maria Cantwell and signed into law by President Barack Obama a couple of weeks ago gives the U.S. marine safety agency six months to conduct a risk assessment of the planned expansion of oil pipeline capacity to the West Coast.

While several proposed projects would see oil from the Alberta oilsands brought to the B.C. coast for export primarily to China, the legislation deals specifically with tanker traffic out of the Vancouver area.

"According to reports, Canada is poised to increase oil tanker traffic through the waters around the San Juan Islands and the Juan de Fuca by up to 300 per cent," said a statement issued by Cantwell's office.

Senator fears possible oil spill

"A supertanker oil spill near our shores would threaten Washington state's thriving coastal economy and thousands of jobs," the Democratic senator said in the statement. "This bill will provide crucial information for Washington coastal communities by requiring a detailed risk analysis...."

The Coast Guard will study the risk of transporting oil via supertanker, tanker and barge through the Salish Sea waterways, which encompasses U.S. and Canadian territorial waters between southern Vancouver Island and the mainland. It includes Juan de Fuca Strait, the Strait of Georgia, Haro and Rosario Straits and Puget Sound.

In order for ships to arrive at port in Vancouver, they usually sail through U.S. waters next to a national marine sanctuary.

The Coast Guard will examine which rules and regulations apply to oil tankers heading to B.C. ports, as well as analyze the toxicity of what is referred to in the legislation as "tar sands"

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oil — a derogatory moniker much opposed by the Canadian industry.

Cantwell said the diluted bitumen that will form part of the Canadian oil exports are likely to require special cleanup technology, and the Coast Guard will also assess the spill response capability.

There are two major oil pipeline proposals currently on the table in British Columbia.

Calgary-based Enbridge's Northern Gateway pipeline would transport oil from the Edmonton area to a tanker port in Kitimat, on the north coast.

But the U.S. legislation appears to affect mainly Kinder Morgan's proposal to expand the capacity of its existing oil pipeline from Alberta to the Vancouver area.

A call to TransMountain seeking comment was not returned.

TransMountain pipeline expansion The \$4.3-billion TransMountain project would more than double the capacity of the 1,100-kilometre pipeline, from 300,000 barrels a day to 750,000. It would also allow the pipeline, which currently transports crude and refined oil from the Alberta oil sands, to transport diluted bitumen, a heavy oil critics say is more difficult to contain and clean-up in the event of a marine spill.

In operation since 1953,

TransMountain runs from just outside Edmonton to Burnaby, and from there the oil is distributed through separate pipelines to local terminals, a refinery and the Westridge marine terminal in Port Metro Vancouver.

The Westridge terminal currently handles about eight vessels a month, five of them tankers. That would increase to about 28 a month, 25 of them tankers, under the proposed expansion plan.

If the application is successful, construction could begin in 2016 and additional oil could be flowing in 2017.

Vancouver city council has passed a motion opposing the expansion, and the mayor of Burnaby — the site of a 2007 spill from the pipeline — has spoken out against the project at a public meeting.

A spokesman for Transport Minister Denis Lebel said the two countries are constantly working together for the safe and secure transportation of natural resources across their shared border.

"Our government has been clear: If any project does not meet or surpass our stringent environmental standards, it will not proceed," spokesman James Kelly said in an email.

"Canada has already strengthened our strong record of environmental protection by requiring double-hulled tankers, mandatory pilotage

and increasing navigational tools - and that work continues."

According to the Washington Research Council, the state has five major petroleum refineries of its own that process about 560,000 barrels of crude oil a day. Approximately 600 oil tankers and 3,000 oil barges travel through Puget Sound on an annual basis.

The commandant of the U.S. Coast Guard must submit recommendations to the House of Representatives' transport committee by the end of June.

O&G COMPANIES PREPARE FOR INTENSIFYING CYCLONE OFF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

A cyclone off Western Australia's north coast is intensifying as it moves closer to land, and it is expected to disrupt coastal areas Friday, the Australian Bureau of Meteorology said in a statement Thursday.

In a warning issued on Thursday, the bureau said: "Severe Tropical Cyclone Narelle has continued moving south southwest overnight and is expected to slowly develop as it continues towards the Northwest Cape. Gales with gusts to 100 kilometers per hour are expected to develop in coastal areas between Whim Creek



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and Onslow including the Karratha area later Friday, then extend west to Exmouth and Ningaloo overnight Friday and Saturday morning."

Karratha is the base for the \$27 billion North West Shelf liquefied natural gas (LNG) project owned by Chevron Energy, Shell, Woodside Petroleum as well as other oil and gas ventures. The major LNG processing facilities in Western Australia include: Gorgon, Prelude, Wheatstone and Ichthys.

A spokesperson representing Woodside told Rigzone Thursday that the company is taking precautions to safeguard its people and assets in response to Cyclone Narelle. The spokesperson added that Woodside will not be confirming any shut-in at its facilities unless there is a material impact to production.

Meanwhile, Chevron is making precautionary arrangements, including tie-down activities, a spokesperson told Rigzone Thursday.

A spokesperson representing Chevron told Rigzone: "We are monitoring the situation and working with our contractors to make the necessary precautionary arrangements ... Personnel not required to close down or re-establish the site prior and following the cyclone are being demobilized."

"Our number one priority is the health and safety of our people," the spokesperson added.

ENERSIGHT™ ANNOUNCES NEW SOFTWARE MODULES FOR THEIR PETROLEUM PLANNING SYSTEM

Enersight Corp., a leading global provider of Field Development Planning Software for oil and gas, has just released two new

modules to expand the functionality of their planning system.

At the corporate level, Enersight provides insights that help the executive team make sound strategic decisions governing the company's operating assets. Enersight Enterprise integrates previous plan iterations with results - reserves, production, cash flow, NPV and more - within and among the fields, and over time.

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On the operational side, Enersight's Drilling and Completions Scheduling module is designed to help your team perform smooth, efficient planning for all the pre-drilling steps (including land access, well licensing, site construction, seasonal restrictions, etc.), rig scheduling, and fracturing. These tasks are key to minimizing spud-to-on-stream times and generating the per-well capital efficiencies and production targets your company is striving to achieve.

Together with Enersight's Planning System, the Scheduling module ties together the short term plan with the medium and long term view - answering the question, "How do the schedule changes impact my exit volumes and long term plan?"

SHELL RE- LAUNCHES HOUSTON TECHNOLOGY CENTER

Royal Dutch Shell's Houston technology center was re-launched Wednesday, the firm reported in a statement.



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Shell said that its Shell Technology Center Houston has undergone extensive modernization and expansion to become one of the "largest industrial technology centers in the world".

The new center is the largest of Shell's three technology hubs (the firm has technology centers at Rijswijk, the Netherlands and at Bangalore, India). With more than one million square feet of laboratory and office space, it is home to more than 2,000 of Shell's scientists and engineers - including six of Shell's Chief Scientists who the firm describes as "international-recognized thought leaders in a range of disciplines".

The Houston center is also the global base for a number of specific technology areas across upstream and downstream.

Shell Director of Projects & Technology Matthias Bichsel commented in the company statement:

"Shell has spent over a billion dollars a year on researching and developing new technologies - more than any of our peers. This investment in innovation and a consistent commitment to collaboration are essential to spark new ideas and develop solutions to today's and tomorrow's energy challenges. They are the keys to delivering much needed energy for a rapidly growing global population and ensuring improved living standards for millions

of people now and in the future."

The news is just the latest to bolster Houston's reputation as a major technology hub for the oil and gas industry. In December, BP announced that it had begun building the world's biggest commercial research computer at its Westlake Campus in Houston.



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