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CENTRAL ALBERTA COUNTY REJECTS \$50M RAIL OIL TRANSFER STATION

County of Vermilion turns down jobs, development for environment, safety

A rural community east of Edmonton is rejecting a proposal to build an oil transfer station in the name of the environment and safety.

Altex Energy hoped to build an oil transfer station in the County of Vermilion where trucks would unload oil onto rail lines 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

The company promised thorough environmental and emergency planning and local jobs — at least 40,

The site for \$50 to \$70 million project would have been 100 metres from Mike Schmidt's property.

Schmidt had a dream to raise his kids in the country, buying a parcel of his parents' land.

"Basically the day I was going to order the house to move there, I found out ... that his would be changed to an industrial property and that I wouldn't want to live beside that."



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Schmidt and 60 other area residents signed a petition and spoke out at a public meeting.

"We felt a little bit like a David and Goliath situation," he said. "Having 250,000 trucks converge on the road right beside us definitely isn't worth that money.

Eventually the municipal

council voted down the project. "I think that in 40 years I would rather have people living here in the county, rather than having it be empty — and only oil wells," said deputy reeve Ed Parke. Schmidt said the benefits of such projects often don't outweigh the cost.

"We live here, we work here, the oil is here," he said. "It should be better for us, but it's not." During the past three years, more than 1,100 new oil wells have been drilled in the area north of Vermillion, Parke said. "Obviously the residents in this county don't benefit from the oil

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and gas industry fairly. And we hear it. There is a lot of frustration."

Parke is hoping Altex can find another site in the county, only farther from where people live.

ENERGY EAST PIPELINE PLAN WORSE THAN KEYSTONE, PEMBINA INSTITUTE SAYS

TransCanada's proposed Energy East Pipeline would result in a dramatic rise in Canada's greenhouse gas emissions, a new report from the Pembina Institute suggests.

The report, released early Thursday, warns that producing the crude that the pipeline will carry could generate 32 million tonnes of additional greenhouse gas emissions each year — the equivalent of adding more than seven million cars to Canada's roads.

Alberta's oilsands companies would have to increase production in the oilsands by 650,000 to 750,000 barrels per day for the pipeline to reach its stated daily capacity of 1.1 million barrels, the report says.

"For a single piece of infrastructure, it's a very big impact," Clare Demerse, the federal policy director for the environmental think-tank, said Wednesday from Ottawa.

Published in advance of TransCanada's expected filing for an application for the project, the report asks the National Energy Board to include the pipeline's overall impacts in its review, and recommends the federal government adopt strong emissions regulations for the oil and gas industry.

"We want regulators to look not only at the infrastructure, but



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whatever goes through the pipeline itself," Demerse said. "We want them to look at the full picture."

In the report, Pembina predicted emissions related to the Energy East project would exceed those of TransCanada's Keystone XL pipeline. A previous analysis by the organization estimated the latter would increase greenhouse gas emissions by 22 million tonnes.

The proposed \$12-billion Energy East pipeline would carry crude 4,500 kilometres from Hardisty in east central Alberta to refineries

and export terminals in Quebec and New Brunswick. TransCanada has yet to file detailed regulatory documents, but expects to be able to deliver crude to Quebec in 2017 and New Brunswick the following year if the project is approved.

A study commissioned by the company last year predicted the project would add \$35 billion to Canada's gross domestic product over 40 years, and \$10.2 billion in tax revenue.

David Sheremata, a TransCanada spokesman, said Wednesday

that technical experts need time to review Pembina's document before the company provides a detailed assessment.

He refuted Pembina's assertions that the pipeline will substantially affect emissions and the rate of extraction in the oilsands, however, and said other means of transportation would be used to get crude from northern Alberta to export markets even if the project does not go through.

Responding to the report, Alberta Energy Minister Diana McQueen reiterated the government's position

that the pipeline would open up important markets to oilsands producers without significant impacts.

"When you look at development in the oilsands, we do it in a very progressive way," McQueen said.

"We work hard to make sure policies in place allow us to find a balance between responsible, sustainable development and protecting the environment."

Saying its calculations were based on figures provided by TransCanada in preliminary reports, Pembina warned that aggressive expansion in

the oilsands will lead to greenhouse gas emissions outpacing reductions that have been forecast over the next two decades. The volume of new production associated with the pipeline's capacity would represent a 34-to 39-per-cent increase in 2012 levels, the report said.

"We came out with this early in the process because we wanted to open the conversation about what we consider to be a project with significant environmental impact," Demerse said. "From our perspective, it's common sense."

ALBERTA FAMILIES LEAVING HOMES FOR HEALTH REASONS BLAME OIL GIANTS NEXT DOOR

Alain Labrecque left his grain farm in northern Alberta in December, 2011.

He, his wife Karla and his two young children, now aged 6 and 5, packed up and eventually settled in Smithers, B.C.

They hadn't planned to move. But their home was making

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them sick, Labrecque says. "We started getting dizzy and getting headaches. We just couldn't shake it," he said. "It came all at once" – in 2010, after an oil company expanded operations around the family's farm southeast of Peace River.

Soon after, living and working on his farm became uncomfortable. Dizziness, digestive problems, muscle cramps and headaches afflicted the family.

"It's like you've got a belt strapped on your head the whole time," he said.

His wife, son and daughter suffered through the winter in 2010. When spring came, they had a reprieve

from the symptoms. But it didn't last. "When it got cold again, then everything would come back," he said.

"By December, we said, 'The heck with this.'"

His brother Donald still lives in the area, though he hopes to leave soon. He complains of headaches, muscle twitches and occasional nosebleeds.

"It's not somewhere where you can take your chances and say, 'I'll live here the next 20 years and raise a family,'" Donald said.

Alain Labrecque believes his family's symptoms were caused by fumes coming from nearby

bitumen storage tanks, owned by Baytex Energy Corporation.

They complained to the provincial body regulating the oil and gas industry. The environment ministry performed air quality tests on his farm. Labrecque laughs when he tells of one recommendation to come out of that testing: "To close our windows and doors when odours were present."

To this day, he said, he still gets sick when he visits his old farm.

The area around Labrecque's former home is a rural mix of farmland and oilpatch operations run by several companies. It's also

become Alberta's epicentre of oil-related complaints: According to a database of complaints from Alberta's Energy Resources Conservation Board (now the Alberta Energy Regulator) obtained by Global News, residents in the Three Creeks area, slightly north of the Labrecques, have complained more often to the regulator than people anywhere else in the province.

Since 2010 there have been 710 complaints – about odours, human and animal health – from people living within a 20-kilometre radius of the centre of Three Creeks.



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**ALLEGED CSIS, RCMP
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COMPLAINT**

RCMP, CSIS accused of violating Charter rights of anti-pipeline activists

Privacy advocates in B.C. are demanding an investigation into the RCMP and Canadian Security Intelligence Service for allegedly spying on opponents of the Northern Gateway pipeline project.

Documents released last year through Access to Information requests show the RCMP and CSIS took direction from the National Energy Board to monitor and report on "threats" to the project's federal review panel by pipeline opponents — including advocacy groups Idle No More and ForestEthics.

The B.C. Civil Liberties Association has lodged two complaints with the organizations responsible for overseeing the RCMP and CSIS, claiming the surveillance was unconstitutional and possibly illegal.

"The RCMP and CSIS have absolutely no business gathering information on people who are engaged in peaceful democratic activity," said BCCLA executive director Josh Paterson.

A senior RCMP official involved in the operation found "no direct or specific criminal threat," but the spying continued anyway. The documents indicate the RCMP relied on sources inside some of the groups.

Possible police infiltration One of the documents includes details of a seminar held in a Kelowna church basement on

how to paint signs and tell stories. "Somebody from CSIS or the RCMP went into that room and wrote a report about what happened in that meeting. We don't know exactly how that was, we don't know who it was, but it's disturbing," said Will Horter, executive director of the advocacy group Dogwood Initiative.

The BCCLA said this kind of detail points to possible infiltration and could be illegal, since CSIS is prohibited from gathering information on the peaceful democratic activities of Canadians.



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"It strongly suggests that they have placed sources within the Idle No More movement, that they may have sources elsewhere, that they may have sources in the volunteer bodies of organizations who are also being spied on — environmental organizations," said Paterson.

"Police should be focusing on crime and law enforcement and public safety, and not scouring through everyone's Twitter feeds and websites to figure out who's having a meeting in what basement to paint which signs with which grandmothers," he said.

'Unfair collusion,' says advocate Surveillance details were apparently shared with Enbridge — the company that owns Northern Gateway — and the wider petroleum industry at a meeting facilitated by Natural Resources Canada.

Ben West with ForestEthics, one of the groups allegedly spied on, called the government's surveillance activities "outrageous."

"It's hard to look at this and not feel like there's an unfair collusion that is underway between the federal government and industry," said West.

Natural Resources Minister Joe Oliver would not discuss his department's involvement in the meeting because it was classified. In a statement, however, he insisted neither he "nor any member of his department gave instructions to any federal agency in this matter."

The complaints filed against the RCMP and CSIS allege the agencies interfered with the Charter right to freedom of expression.

The RCMP said it has not received official notification of the complaint made by the BCCLA, and therefore would not comment. However, it said

in a statement it takes "all public complaints seriously and will fully co-operate with the [Commissioner for Public Complaints] if necessary."

CSIS, meanwhile, denied the allegations.

"While I cannot comment on specific complaints, what I can say is that CSIS investigates — and advises government on — threats to national security, and that does not include peaceful protest and dissent," said CSIS spokesperson Tahera Mufti in a statement.



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