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ANTI-SHALE GAS GROUP LAUNCHES LEGAL ACTION AGAINST N.B. GOVERNMENT

A New Brunswick group has launched legal action against the provincial government in an effort to halt shale gas exploration in the province.

The New Brunswick Anti-Shale Gas Alliance filed the 18-page statement of claim Monday with the Court of Queen's Bench in Saint John.

The alliance – which includes 22 community organizations – is calling for a moratorium on the development of unconventional shale gas and oil in New Brunswick until scientific studies show it can be done safely.

The group is concerned that shale gas wells pose a danger to water and the air.

It says Premier David Alward's Progressive Conservative government has dismissed scientific evidence about the threat posed by the industry.

The government has been promoting the industry in the hopes it will create jobs and revenue.

The province was not immediately

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APPRENTICESHIPS GAIN MOMENTUM IN UPSTREAM OIL, GAS SECTOR

Apprenticeships have gained

popularity in today's modern world as the demand for skilled trade workers in the upstream oil and gas industry continues. More companies are establishing formal apprenticeship programs to ensure sustained employment while promoting successful progression

of apprentices through technical training, noted The Petroleum Human Resources Council in a whitepaper, "Exploring Apprenticeship Completions of Skilled Trades in the Upstream Oil and Gas Industry." With the demand for skilled labor intensifying, countries are looking at

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training and development programs so incomers can learn the practical and theoretical aspects of a highly-skilled occupation. Canada's upstream oil and gas industry is estimated to employ more than 45,000 skilled tradespeople, and industry demand for these workers is projected to grow by about 7,100 jobs by 2022. The demand for skilled workers is expected to grow in all trades, with particularly strong demand for power engineers, heavy equipment operators and oil and gas well drillers, servicers, testers and related workers.

The Canadian regions with the highest increase in demand for workers in skilled trade occupations over the next decade are:

- **Alberta:** Between 2013 and 2023, Alberta will have a

shortage of 6,788 workers in skilled trade oil and gas occupations.

- **British Columbia:** Oil and gas expansion in British Columbia will result in new demand for more than 7,637 additional occupations.

- **Saskatchewan:** New job creation in Saskatchewan results in 5,400 additional trades and transport workers from 2013 to 2017.

- **Atlantic Canada:** The greatest occupational demand in Newfoundland and Labrador between 2011 and 2020 include oil and gas drillers, supervisors, operators and machinery equipment mechanics.

Petroleum Human Resources Council noted that growth in apprentice registrations is especially strong in Alberta where the total number of new apprentices registered last year grew by almost




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50 percent from 2010. Although Alberta has only 12 percent of the country's labor force, it trains around 20 percent of the country's apprentices. This initiative created almost 13,800 new apprentices skilled in core trades for oil and gas.

"If the provinces were able to maintain this high level of new registrations, and if all the apprentices completed their training, within 12 years, Alberta could double the labor force of oil and gas trade occupations," the white paper noted.

How Can Employers Benefit from Hiring Apprentices?

Employers with apprentices experience an average incremental revenue of \$1.47 for every dollar they invest in apprentice training, which is a return of nearly 50 percent, according to the Canadian

Apprenticeship Forum (CAF).

Additionally, when oil and gas employers hire apprentices that are transitioning out of other industries, they have related skills that transfer well into this industry, the whitepaper stated. Meaning, less time is needed to effectively train and educate a newcomer into this industry.

"Oil and gas employers can build strong relationships with apprentices and grow their talent from within," it said. "They will not only develop their talent, but they will also retain this talent for a number of years."

Within the United States, there are more than 375,000 apprentices currently obtaining the skills they need in an apprenticeship program. In 2013, more than 164,000 individuals nationwide entered the apprenticeship system and over

52,000 participants graduated from the system, according to the United States Department of Labor.

Are Other Regions Participating in Apprenticeship Programs?

OPITO, a UK-based oil and gas skills organization and in partnership with the Engineering Construction Industry Training Board (ECITB) celebrated its 15 year anniversary of its youth training programs last month. The program has graduated more than 1,400 people since the programs formation in 1999, according to its website.

The program, which is backed by more than 15 United Kingdom companies and is one of the biggest industry-led Modern Apprenticeship programs of its kind, offers a range of disciplines including process operations, electrical, instrument and control maintenance. Split into two phases, the program offers a 21-month full-time course at one of the industry-appointed colleges in Aberdeen, Forth Valley or Edinburgh, before embarking on a two-year worksite placement.

"Apprenticeship programs are an excellent example of how an industry can proactively tackle its skills issues. Oil and gas is the UK's largest industrial investor, contributing billions to the economy and employing more than 440,000 people. The recruitment and training of technicians is critical to developing and retaining the workforce we need to continue to take on the world's toughest energy challenges," said John McDonald, UK managing director of OPITO, in a news release.

"We receive thousands of applications annually from young people keen to be part of the industry journey. The qualifications they gain are recognized internationally so the apprentices have the skills required to work anywhere in the world and, as such, are highly sought after by employers. As the skills organization for oil and gas, we are keen to ensure that future generations of workers are aware of the opportunities in the sector and we believe that it is critical that industry plays a role in maintaining students' levels of interest in the sector from a young age," he said.

CANADA APPROVES ENBRIDGE PIPELINE TO WEST COAST

The Canadian government approved the construction of Enbridge Inc's C\$7.9 billion (\$7.22 billion) Northern Gateway pipeline on Tuesday, contingent on the company meeting all conditions set out in a report by a regulatory panel.

The federal review panel had urged the government to approve the project, which would link Alberta's oil sands with a Pacific port, after concluding that it would pose little risk to the environment if the company complied with 209 environmental, technical and social conditions.

"After carefully reviewing the report, the Government accepts the independent Panel's recommendation to impose 209 conditions on Northern Gateway Pipelines' proposal," Canada's Natural Resources minister Greg

Rickford said in a statement.

NORTHERN GATEWAY IS GOOD FOR THE NORTH: N.W.T. PREMIER

'We're still very bullish on the Canol Shale,' says Premier Bob McLeod

Northwest Territories Premier Bob McLeodsays the approval of the Northern Gateway Pipeline is good news for the North.

He says that pipeline won't just open up new markets for Alberta

crude — it will also benefit markets for new oil discoveries that might be tapped in NWT.

"We need to find markets for our oil and gas potential. The United States they have significant amounts of shale gas. Obviously we have to look at other markets. One of the ways is to look at Asia, China and those places."

But McLeod is cautious about the project, pointing out that the Mackenzie Valley gas pipeline was approved in 2011, but never built.

New petroleum office in Inuvik

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McLeod made the comments during the opening of a new Petroleum Resources Division office in Inuvik, N.W.T.

The new office will award oil and gas rights in the territory. Before April 1 of this year, when devolution took effect, the federal government decided where companies could explore and awarded drilling rights.

McLeod says with this power in the hands of the territory, there are many opportunities.

"We're still very bullish on the Canol Shale," he says, referring to the oil rich rock in the Sahtu region.

Last month, Husky Energy withdrew an application to drill and frack up to four wells in the area this winter, opting instead to postpone drilling for two years. Earlier this year, ConocoPhillips — the other big energy player in the region — announced it will not be drilling in the region next winter.

"We're putting out another call for bids," McLeod says. "We're optimistic there will be good interest in that. There is potential activity in the Liard area for shale gas. And also in the Cameron Hill, so lots of potential."

McLeod says the Inuvik office will only manage onshore exploration.

The federal government still decides which companies can drill for oil in the Beaufort Sea.

In August the territory is scheduled to begin meeting with Ottawa to discuss transferring this responsibility to the territory.

QUEBEC OKS ANTICOSTI ISLAND SURVEYS FOR OIL

The Quebec government has given the green light to go ahead with environmental assessments to see if it is possible to explore for oil on Anticosti Island.

Natural Resources Minister Pierre Arcand said Friday about 15 surveys will be conducted on the island's soil this summer.

More extensive work, including the drilling of three wells, will be done in the summer of 2015 if the results of a strategic environmental assessment on Anticosti Island are favourable.

The activity is in conformity with a deal struck by the previous Parti Quebecois government with exploration companies Petrolia (TSX:PEA) and Corridor Resources Inc. (TSX:CDH).

Arcand also announced a strategic assessment will be carried out on hydrocarbons, including shale gas.

The aim is to examine the oil and gas potential for Quebec and determine the best ways to tap the resource.

Arcand said oil will continue to play a major role in the Quebec economy for decades to come.

"You understand that with it accounting for more than 50 per cent of our total energy consumption, it is impossible to go without hydrocarbons in the coming decades," Arcand said.

He said the PQ had insisted the Anticosti project could be worth billions in revenue for the province

and he feels the studies are necessary to determine if that's true.

Arcand also said Quebec wants to accelerate talks with the federal government to set the rules on the possible exploitation of the Old Harry oil and gas deposit in the Gulf of St. Lawrence.

The provincial government will also work with the National Energy Board on the TransCanada Energy East pipeline project.

The PQ was less impressed with the government's efforts and accused the Liberals of trying to

resurrect the shale-gas industry.

CANADIAN STOCKS FALL MOST IN FIVE MONTHS AS ENERGY SHARES SLIDE

Canadian stocks fell the most in almost five months as a sell-off in energy and materials stocks dragged down the benchmark index amid escalating violence in Iraq.

Penn West Petroleum Ltd. and Husky Energy Inc. retreated at least 3.7 percent to pace losses among energy stocks, which fell

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1.9 percent as a group. Descartes Systems Group Inc. fell 1.9 percent after saying it would sell additional shares. Smart Technologies Inc. jumped 4.7 percent after signing an agreement to provide New York state schools with its software.

The Standard & Poor's/TSX Index fell 143.26 points, or 1 percent, to 14,962.37 at 4 p.m. in Toronto, the biggest drop since Feb. 3.

The Wall Street Journal reported that Syrian warplanes struck targets in a western Iraqi province. U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry met officials of Iraq's semi-autonomous Kurdish region in his bid to prod leaders to unite against an al-Qaeda offshoot that has seized control over swaths of the country.

Penn West decreased 4.5 percent to C\$10.31 and Husky fell 3.7 percent to C\$34.55 as energy stocks declined the most since May 8. Materials stocks lost 1.8 percent.

Descartes Systems tumbled 1.9 percent to C\$15.27 as it said it would sell 9.5 million shares to fund potential acquisitions and pay down debt. The software company did not provide pricing for the sale.

Smart Technologies gained 4.7 percent to C\$3.02 after the education technology company said it reached a pact to provide software to more than 450 New York school districts.

Methanex Corp. advanced 2.7 percent to C\$67.61 after BMO Capital Markets raised its rating on the methanol producer to outperform, the equivalent of buy, from market perform.

LIQUEFIED NATURAL GAS PLANT PITCHED FOR EDMONTON AREA

A Chinese firm is behind a new Alberta joint-venture company that wants to build a liquefied natural gas plant in the province.

Gascana AB Energy Ltd. was recently established by the Qingdao Sinoenergy Corporation of China and Calgary based-Petrox Resources.

Petrox said the goal is to build a plant that could produce close to 3,000 tonnes of LNG per day for export.

The proposal calls for the LNG plant to be built in an industrial park to be developed in Sturgeon County north of Edmonton.

The liquefied natural gas would be transported to market in rail cars to British Columbia for export to China.

The Edmonton Economic Development Corp. is working with Gascana on the proposal and said the project could include other petrochemical and manufacturing plants worth more than \$4 billion.

Brad Ferguson, president of the EEDC, said if all of the proposals go ahead, the gas plant and the other projects would create 2,000 permanent jobs.

Ferguson said the development would be built in three stages over five years.

"We are excited about it, but like other projects, there are a number of hurdles that you have to go through in order for it to become a reality," Ferguson said Monday.

"They have a long way to go. Our job is to work with them to make them successful."

Ferguson said the EEDC, which is owned by the City of Edmonton, would provide media and government relations advice to Gascana.

Officials with Gascana could not be reached for comment.

The Alberta Energy Regulator, which reviews such proposals, has not received an application for the project.

TRUCK ROLLS ON ALBERTA HIGHWAY, SPILLING OIL

Highway 831 south of Boyle was blocked for some of the day Tuesday, as cleanup from a semi rollover continued.

On Sunday at about 10 a.m., a semi-tractor with two trailers heading south on Highway 831 went into the west ditch and rolled about 15 kilometres south of Boyle.

The tanker trailers ruptured during

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negative impact on consumers of higher gasoline prices," said Mohr.

Todd Crawford, senior economist at the Conference Board of Canada, agrees the higher prices will be good for the bottom line of industry and government alike, but not necessarily on a sustained basis.

The long-term outlook for oil is little changed, he said.

"In general, when we have a higher risk of conflict in that region of the world, it tends to put an additional premium on oil prices," he said.

"It's not really related to the underlying fundamentals of oil right now, which are still very strong, but wouldn't have supported the \$4 and \$5 per barrel jump that we've seen, say, in the last 30 days or so."

"So in reality, the status quo hasn't changed. This is just an additional risk premium that results in a flow of financial benefit, but not necessarily an impact on the real Canadian economy."

A rise in oil prices also tends to drive up the Canadian dollar, which can be a drag on exporters.

"Exports were incredibly weak in the first quarter, so it's really not the best time to see this," said Crawford.

"And of course it has a roundabout impact on our monetary policy. We're sort of out of room to cut our interest rates any more. So there's no monetary policy that can lessen the impact of higher oil prices on our Canadian dollar if there is a goal to keep the Canadian dollar trading at around 90 cents (US)."

Oil prices have climbed to 10-month highs in recent weeks amid rising sectarian tensions in Iraq. To date,

the violence has not had a substantial impact on crude output there, but it's been causing market jitters.

West Texas Intermediate oil for August delivery, the main North American benchmark, was trading at around US\$106 per barrel on Tuesday.

The head of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries, Abdullah Al-Badry, said market speculation is to blame for the increase in prices as Iraq is "still producing as normal," with 95 per cent of its capacity in the country's south unaffected by the violence.

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