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ETHAN HAWKE TO HELP MI'KMAQ OPPOSE GULF OF ST. LAWRENCE OIL EXPLORATION

First Nations from Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Quebec holding event on Monday

Actor Ethan Hawke will be lending some of his star power to First Nations groups in Eastern Canada that oppose oil and gas exploration in the Gulf of St. Lawrence.

The leadership of the Paqtnkek, Listuguj, Gesgapegiag and Gespeg First Nations will be holding a joint press conference and water ceremony Monday by the coast at 577 Summerside Rd. in Afton, which is in Antigonish County, Nova Scotia.

Hawke will be a special guest and is scheduled to answer questions following a press conference. The four-time Oscar nominee who is known for films such as Training Day, Dead Poets Society and Boyhood has property in the area.

Troy Jerome, executive director of the Mi'gma'we' Mawiyomi Secretariat, says First Nations groups and organizations like the Save Our Seas and Shores Coalition have been

working to raise awareness for years and a big name like Hawke's can bring new attention to their concerns.

The group is calling for a 12-year exploration moratorium, which Jerome says is needed so the government can conduct a comprehensive review.

"The public should be saying the same things the Mi'kmaq, the aboriginal people, are saying. Show us a study before you think about drilling in there," he said.

"It's unproven, but even if there's oil there, it's not disappearing."

Jerome says people who live in the region — which includes the four Atlantic provinces and Quebec — haven't been adequately consulted, but also haven't been that engaged.

He hopes Hawke's profile will encourage the public to push for more information about how drilling and any potential blowouts could affect the area.

"If there's an oil spill it's going to go on the shores of Newfoundland, by some spill scenarios, up all the way up the St. Lawrence River. No one really knows," he said.

Coming on the heels of the recent federal election, Jerome hopes the event sends a message to industry

and the new federal government. "By having his [Ethan Hawke's] presence, it raises a level of exposure to another level," he said. "The timing turned out to be very good."

Mary Gorman of the Save our Seas and Shore Coalition says tens of thousands of jobs in the fishing and tourism industries could be impacted by offshore drilling.

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"We have been fighting this battle before Keystone, before Northern Gateway, before Energy East. All of these battles have taken precedence over our battle," she said.

"There will be oil on the coast of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland if our politicians are foolish enough to let this proceed. And yet we chronically fall under the radar. And that's why Ethan is helping us."

Hawke has voiced concerns about the environmental risks of offshore drilling before.

In 2011, he released a statement with the David Suzuki Foundation and the Save Our Seas and Shores Coalition in a campaign calling for the moratorium on offshore oil and gas drilling in the gulf.

The site of Monday's ceremony is close to where Donald Marshall Jr. was arrested for fishing eels out of season, which led to a landmark 1999 Supreme Court of Canada ruling that guaranteed aboriginal treaty rights to fish and hunt.

Paqtnkek councillor Darlene Prosper says Monday's events will begin with a water ceremony scheduled for 12:30 p.m. AT.

FRACKING, LANDSLIDE BLAMED FOR CONTAMINATION OF NORTHERN B.C. CREEK

B.C.'s Oil and Gas Commission says 'no evidence' that fracking to blame, heavy metals naturally in soil

A relentless landslide that's contaminated a source of drinking water near a community in

northeastern B.C. has residents blaming oil and gas exploration's effects underground for causing the slide that's contaminating the creek with silt and heavy metals.

Farmers and ranchers near Hudson's Hope say they've lost their sole water source and blame landslides on changes to underground aquifers and land stability because of nearby fracking and the effect of two nearby hydro dams, but officials say there is no proof of this.

"I have no water," said Rhee Simpson, who has lived and farmed along Brenot Creek for 62 years.

"You can't play in it. You can't fish in it. You can't drink it. Your stock can't drink it. Someone has to do something to get our water back."

Brenot Creek has long carried clean water to families, crops and cattle near Hudson's Hope in northeastern B.C. The creek is a tributary of Lynx Creek, whose water eventually flows into the nearby Peace River.

Last year, a landslide started oozing grey mud, filling the creek with silt and sand. Tests by the Ministry of the Environment showed dangerously high concentrations of heavy metals, including lead, barium, cadmium, and arsenic.

In September 2014, the District of Hudson's Hope and Northern Health issued an advisory to stop using the creek's water for drinking, stock watering or farm irrigation.

"Clean water is essential for life and all of us need to feel confident that the ground and surface water we all depend on is of good quality. We will continue to press for answers to how exotic metals came to be present

in the groundwater," Mayor Gwen Johansson wrote on the District of Hudson's Hope website in January.

Since then, debris has continued to slide, filling the creek with heavy metal silts and sand.

"My wife grew up on that farm and used to catch fish in that creek. It's dead. It's hard to watch," said resident Leigh Summer.

The mayor said this summer there was so much heavy metal silt it created a visible debris plume and sandbar in the Peace River.

Johansson continues to search for answers as to why this is happening and who will pay for any clean-up.

"There are a lot of vulnerabilities in this area as far as water is concerned," she told CBC News. "It's a real concern."

In the past, hydraulic fracturing, or fracking, in the region has triggered earthquakes. Fracking is the process of injecting water, sand and chemicals at high pressure deep underground to break rock and free gas.

However, an internal report prepared by B.C.'s Oil and Gas Commission, and obtained by CBC News, states there's "no evidence" that five fracking and disposal wells in the area are associated with the landslide. The report also notes a "prevalence of natural metals" in the soil and historic instability in the area.

The commission says the heavy metals found in the silts and sands of the creek occur naturally and the area is prone to landslides.

In an email to CBC News, commission

spokesman Alan Clay says heavy metals were present in the region's soil prior to oil and gas activity.

In response to queries from CBC News, David Karn from the Ministry of Environment says several government ministries will now tour the slide zone to re-assess the situation and re-test local water.

Meanwhile, Simpson's neighbour, Leigh Summer says the slide is so unusual he calls it "landsliding."

"This thing is continuous," Summer said.

"It's been 24 hours a day for two years. Stuff is literally falling in there as you stand there and watch."

"We can no longer water," he said, breaking into tears. "We can longer irrigate, we can no longer allow our children to play in the creek."

"My wife grew up on that farm and used to catch fish in that creek. It's dead. It's hard to watch really."

Summer and Simpson blame the pressures of nearby industries — two BC Hydro dams with the Williston reservoir, and a high-density fracking zone. Summer said he believes those industries may have had an impact on the underground aquifers.

Simpson agreed. "Where is the chemicals and junk coming from?" he asked. "I highly believe it's coming from the fracking. I personally think what they pushed into the ground, has got to come up."

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TransCanada supports a proposal to buy out its stake in the proposed trans-Alaska natural gas pipeline, deputy natural resources director Marty Rutherford told the Alaska House Finance Committee on Sunday afternoon.

"They are supportive of the administration buying out their position," Rutherford said after a question from Rep. Cathy Muñoz, R-Juneau.

"I'm still a little shocked at this," said Rep. Scott Kawasaki, D-Fairbanks, in response to the assertion that TransCanada wants to be bought out. "I figured it was kind of a divorce."

"We were just dating," Rutherford replied.

The announcement came in the second day of a special Alaska Legislature session devoted

to considering the buyout. Lawmakers are being asked to immediately allocate \$157.6 million to complete the buyout and pay for the state's share of the first phase of the AKLNG project.

That project envisions an 800-mile natural gas pipeline from the North Slope to Cook Inlet, where a plant to create liquefied natural gas (the LNG in AKLNG) will be built to ship gas around the world.

The state has partnered with energy giants BP, ConocoPhillips and ExxonMobil to split the cost of the \$45 billion to \$65 billion effort. With the state facing a multibillion-dollar gap between revenue and expenses, the state has partnered with TransCanada to pay Alaska's upfront costs. In exchange, TransCanada is

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guaranteed repayment at 7.1 percent interest even if the project fails and the pipeline is never built. If it is built, TransCanada gets a share of the state's revenue from the pipeline.

Now, the Alaska Legislature is being asked to consider whether it is cheaper for the state to raise the money on the open market — through bonds or some other kind of financing — and pay for the project on its own.

Deepa Poduval, a director with Black and Veatch, which the state has hired to advise it on gas pipeline issues, said the state's partners in AKLNG — BP, ConocoPhillips and ExxonMobil —

"have essentially said it's the state's decision; they're relatively neutral."

Rutherford said TransCanada has 15 employees working on AKLNG on behalf of the state, and their work would be replaced by the Alaska Gasline Development Corporation, said Department of Natural Resources commissioner Mark Meyers.

What expertise TransCanada brings to the project is a question best asked of TransCanada, Meyers said.

Representatives from TransCanada were not present in the capitol on Sunday, but

they are scheduled to speak to the Legislature on Wednesday, according to legislative calendars.

Rep. Mark Neuman, R-Big Lake and chairman of the House Finance Committee, raised questions about whether the AGDC has the authority to replace TransCanada. Rutherford responded that the Department of Law interpretation allowing that action would be provided to lawmakers.

Though Meyers, has the ability to end the state's deal with TransCanada "with the stroke of a pen," Rutherford told lawmakers, the Legislature is the body that makes financial decisions in the state.

Rutherford told the House Finance Committee that unless lawmakers agree to pay for the buyout, the state will continue to work with TransCanada.

It doesn't have enough money to do anything else: the Alaska Legislature didn't even fully fund ordinary work on the gas pipeline in its budget earlier this year.

"We had requested I think \$13 million," Rutherford said. "We were funded slightly under \$9 million ... with the note that should we need the additional money to come back in a supplemental request. That is in fact what we're doing."

The \$157.6 million funding request being considered by lawmakers includes \$68.5 million to buy out TransCanada, \$75 million to pay for direct pipeline work through the end of 2016, and almost \$14 million to pay for pipeline work performed by state agencies.

Current forecasts also indicate the state would be required to pay \$875 million for work between 2017 and 2019, then another \$12 billion to \$16 billion once construction begins in or about 2019. Those amounts would be spread over several years.

PRICE ON CARBON WOULD HELP SALVAGE KEYSTONE XL, FORMER TRANSCANADA EXEC SAYS

A retired executive with pipeline builder TransCanada Corp. believes the long-stalled Keystone XL project can still be salvaged — if incoming Liberal prime minister Justin Trudeau acts swiftly on climate change.

Putting a price on carbon emissions is the last option Canada has available to persuade U.S. President Barack Obama to approve the controversial cross-border oilsands pipeline, said Dennis McConaghy, who left TransCanada last year.

He said it's been "enormously frustrating" to see Keystone XL stuck in limbo more than seven years after it was first proposed and feels it has not been dealt with fairly in the U.S. regulatory process.

"Carbon pricing was the last alternative at accommodation that could have been tried. It's still available, perhaps, for our new prime minister," McConaghy said from London, Ont., where he's a visiting fellow at Western University's Ivey Business School.

"I would hope that (Trudeau) would quickly engage with the president on that point. There's

no pipeline that would be more valuable to Canada than XL."

McConaghy's role at TransCanada was to develop new pipeline opportunities rather than oversee the nitty-gritty of obtaining permits and approvals.

He stressed that he was sharing his personal views, not those of his former employer.

Trudeau has expressed support for Keystone XL, the \$8-billion proposal that would enable 830,000 barrels a day of mostly oilsands crude to flow to the lucrative U.S.

Gulf Coast market. During the campaign, Trudeau slammed the Conservatives' handling of the file.

In a recent blog post for the Niskanen Center, a libertarian think-tank, McConaghy said outgoing Conservative prime minister Stephen Harper showed an "almost pathological resistance to carbon pricing" — even if it meant smoothing the way for Keystone XL.

"Such logic was beyond Harper," he wrote.

"The Keystone XL pipeline project might have been salvaged if Harper



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had been more willing to see carbon pricing as a means to address environmental concerns. The failure to pursue approval of the pipeline through carbon pricing is one of the great missed opportunities of Harper's last term as prime minister."

Obama has made it clear he will not allow Keystone XL to be built if it worsens climate change and Democratic presidential contender Hillary Clinton has come out against the project.

McConaghy said it does not appear that a string of State Department environmental reviews have been enough to convince Obama that the pipeline is environmentally benign.

In the interview, McConaghy preferred not to dwell on Harper's missteps and focus instead on what can be done with a Liberal majority government in Ottawa.

"I would hope our Canadian prime minister would be proactive in trying to at least say to the president: 'before you decide anything on this, talk to me.'"

Some of the biggest oilsands operators, including Suncor Energy, Cenovus Energy and Shell have spoken out in favour of a carbon tax — so long as it applies to everyone and doesn't single out energy producers.

But so far the companies whose pipelines carry oilsands crude to market — like TransCanada — have not said much publicly on that score.

"We support efforts that will continue to demonstrate that Keystone XL meets the president's stated climate test that it won't significantly exacerbate GHG (greenhouse gas) emissions," said TransCanada

spokesman Mark Cooper. "Five reports since 2010 and 17,000 pages of study by the U.S. State Department Keystone XL will not significantly impact the environment or the climate."

OIL BELOW \$44 AFTER GOLDMAN PREDICTS PRICE CRASH WHEN STORAGE TANKS FILL

Analysts say oil supply may not balance with demand in 2016

Oil edged below \$44 US a barrel on Monday, after another bearish outlook for crude from Goldman Sachs.

Goldman said in a research report that oil prices could go "sharply lower" as storage tanks hit capacity, predicting the oil market would not balance itself in 2016.

West Texas Intermediate oil closed down 78 cents at \$43.81 US a barrel on Monday afternoon, while Brent, the main international contract, was down 59 cents at \$47.42 US a barrel.

Western Canada Select, a Canadian oilsands contract, had fallen below \$30 again to \$29.23 US a barrel.

The oversupply of oil worldwide has had storage tanks in Cushing, Oklahoma, at record levels for most of the year. It's not just crude that is in oversupply, but also refined products.

Goldman Sachs sees further risk to crude prices which are already down 60 per cent from a year ago.

"Distillate storage utilization in the U.S. and Europe is nearing historically high levels, following near record refinery utilization, only modest demand growth

(especially relative to gasoline), and increased imports from the East on refinery expansion and Chinese exports," it said in its report.

Earlier this year, Goldman predicted WTI oil could go as low as \$20 a barrel.

Research consultancy Energy Aspects points to a similar situation in Europe. The crude oil tankers are taking slow routes to their destinations while they await space in port storage facilities.

Many oil speculators have been taking long positions in oil, thinking that the market will be balanced next year and prices will rise.

But the continued glut is starting to discourage that strategy.

Fatih Birol, executive director of the International Energy Agency, is expecting still further declines in oil industry investment in the coming year.

Speaking at Singapore International Energy Week on Monday, he said it would be the first time in two decades that oil investment declines for two consecutive years.

Traders are also waiting to hear whether the U.S. Federal Reserve raises interest rates after its meeting this week. Speculation that the Fed will not raise rates has pushed down the U.S. currency.

As a result, the loonie closed the day unchanged at 75.95 US cents.

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