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OILSANDS CRITIC LAUDS COMPANIES FOR HELPING FORT MCKAY FIRST NATION DURING FORT MCMURRAY EVACUATION

Dr. John O'Connor and his wife cared for Fort McKay residents and evacuees after Fort McMurray was evacuated. Dr. John O'Connor is known for raising concerns about the health impact of oilsands development on indigenous people. But now he is praising those same companies for helping the people of Fort McKay during the Fort McMurray evacuation. "We were absolutely floored and so happy for the kind of support we got — especially from industry," said O'Connor, who has been serving residents of Fort McKay with his wife Charlene, a treatment nurse, for 18 years. Evacuees began pouring into Fort McKay on May 3. But their tiny health centre was not set up for the emergencies cropping up. Supplies were dwindling, especially the IV fluids needed by patients such as a child with pancreatitis. But within half an hour of a call, an EMS vehicle pulled up outside the clinic. "Syn crude had delivered four boxes of everything we would need," said

O'Connor, who travels back and forth between Fort McKay and Edmonton weekly. "And we were just told if you need anything more, just call us and we'll be there." O'Connor emphasized that past criticism was not directed at industry but rather what he saw as the previous government's failure to look after people's interests. He said they saw the same sort of support from Suncor and Imperial Oil. Similarly, Shell and CNRL flew out vulnerable residents while CNRL "bent over backwards" picking up and caring for people until they boarded a flight to Edmonton. "The word back I got back from them was that 'we were treated like royalty,'" said O'Connor. "And that was the hallmark of this throughout that week. It was unbelievable. I was so thankful." O'Connor also lauded Fort McKay residents for stepping up. Candace Fabian "needs to take a bow," he said, after taking in 23 people, mostly strangers, and lending out her vehicle. "The way people pulled together was absolutely breathtaking and certainly fills me with pride for having witnessed what went on," said O'Connor. But community and industry weren't the only ones to go above and beyond.

On the day of the evacuation, the

O'Connors raced to Fort McMurray to pick up Charlene's mother. Instead of continuing south, they headed back. "Nothing would keep John from caring for his patients; not even the prospect of the city burning around him," said the O'Connors' son-in-law Clayton MacEachern of Fort McMurray, who also ended up in Fort McKay with his wife and their two children. But when the road opened again a few days later and they headed south, the O'Connors stayed put. "Dr. O'Connor and Charlene stayed because the community of Fort McKay needed them and they were not capable of separating themselves from that responsibility — a responsibility they have had for 18 years," said MacEachern. The following weekend, the air quality index in Fort McKay shot up to 520 (on a scale of 1 to 10, 10 is considered unacceptable). The O'Connors worked throughout the night and into the morning to ensure elders, asthmatics, mothers of young children and others boarded a well stocked bus, accompanied by an ambulance, heading south. "This is the reason why we stayed," said O'Connor. "We weren't doing anything over and above what anybody else would have done in that situation."

"We were doing what we needed to do to ensure the safety of the vulnerable section of Fort McKay." Their mission accomplished, the O'Connors finally boarded a plane later that day. But MacEachern said in "true Dr. O'Connor fashion", even as the physician walked off the plane, he was on the phone giving personal care to a Fort McKay resident. He took "a break just long enough to give his granddaughters a kiss and continue on with his duty to the people," said MacEachern. The O'Connors continue to deliver care to the residents of Fort McKay First Nation by phone, as well as travelling to St. Paul to check up on elders in person.

GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSION RULE TO ADD MILLIONS TO TRANS MOUNTAIN COST: KINDER MORGAN

Kinder Morgan accepts provision because it will reduce company's environmental footprint

It will cost millions of dollars more to build the Trans Mountain expansion because of an unprecedented requirement to offset greenhouse gas emissions from pipeline construction, the project's proponent says. But

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Ian Anderson, president of Kinder Morgan Canada, said Thursday he has no objections to the unexpected provision because it gives the company a chance to reduce its environmental footprint. "It was new to us, we hadn't seen that in draft form (but) we welcome it," Anderson said in one of his first interviews since the \$6.8-billion project was given the National Energy Board's conditional blessing last week. "It will add cost. Those offsets will cost something. I don't know what that will be yet." As part of its conditional approval, the federal regulator said Kinder Morgan would have to account for the greenhouse gas emissions that would arise from building the expanded pipeline and present a plan on how it would bring the net impact of those emissions to nil. That would have to be done within four months of the expanded pipeline beginning operations. Alan Ross, a partner with Calgary law firm Borden Ladner Gervais who specializes in energy regulation, said the new NEB provisions could be included in other future pipeline decisions where appropriate. "If it remains unchallenged on appeal or if the federal government ultimately approves this decision with that requirement in it, then it may well be something that the National Energy Board looks to do in future," he said. Anderson said Kinder Morgan estimates that one million tonnes of emissions would come from building the project. The company is working on an offset plan that could include planting trees to capture carbon and buying emission credits from other parties, he said. In its application

to the NEB, Kinder Morgan said about 90 per cent of its construction emissions would be generated from land-clearing operations and the burning of waste vegetation. The NEB's recommendation has been forwarded to Ottawa, where cabinet is expected to make a final decision in December. Its decision will also be influenced by a newly required assessment of upstream greenhouse gases emitted as oil is produced before it gets to the pipeline. The cabinet is also to consider a report expected in November from a three-member panel assigned to solicit feedback from communities and indigenous groups near the pipeline route. Anderson said the project must still win a provincial environmental certificate in B.C., where it faces fierce environmental and municipal opposition. The Trans Mountain expansion between Edmonton and Burnaby, B.C., would nearly triple the existing crude oil pipeline's capacity from 300,000 barrels per day to 890,000 bpd. Most of its capacity is committed to producers who have signed 15- and 20-year contracts to gain access to tidewater and the world oil market.

Anderson said Kinder Morgan is getting to work on satisfying roughly half of the 157 NEB conditions that must be in place before construction can begin. He said the company will hire more staff over the coming months as it gears up for an expected in-service date of December 2019.

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Net income \$108M, down from record profit of \$329M last year. ATB Financial has reported a two-thirds drop in net income for the fiscal year ended in March, mainly due to provisions for possible loan losses because of the deteriorating Alberta economy. ATB reported net income of \$108 million, down from a record profit of \$329 million last year. The Alberta government-owned lender said the main reason for the drop was an increase in provisions on its balance sheet for loan losses to \$388 million from \$73 million the previous year. That number is in the same ballpark as the \$460 million reported by the Royal Bank and \$324 million reported by CIBC earlier this week, although both federally regulated banks are much larger than ATB. CIBC said most of its provisions were for loans related

to the struggling Canadian oil and gas sector centred in Alberta. ATB president and CEO Dave Mowat said Albertans are hurting because of low oil and gas prices and the partial shutdown of the oilsands due to wildfires in the Fort McMurray region in the northeastern part of the province. The Edmonton-based lender noted its operating revenue grew 5.8 per cent to \$1.5 billion last year, loans grew by 7.1 per cent and deposits grew by almost one per cent. Actual loan losses for the past fiscal year were \$76 million.

BOTH SIDES OF PIPELINE DEBATE PLAY OUT AT LIBERAL PARTY CONVENTION IN WINNIPEG

Friday morning speakers
present differing views
of resource development

"Last time we spoke, Prime Minister Trudeau encouraged me to speak my mind and push hard whenever I felt we might collectively err," said Steven Guilbeault, the environmental activist invited to address Liberal Party delegates first thing on Friday morning. "Let's talk pipelines then." A pleasant weekend in Winnipeg suddenly seemed in danger of being ruined, or at least livened up. Guilbeault proceeded to address the prime minister directly. "Prime Minister, large pipeline projects have failed to get social licence from all across the continent. From Lincoln, Nebraska, to Kitimat, B.C., to Montreal, Quebec — communities don't want them," he said. "The atmosphere and our climate certainly don't need them. Many of us believe we cannot build pipelines and meet our international climate commitments at the same time." And with a world working around the clock to avoid the worst of climate change, it makes no sense from an ethical and a moral perspective to produce and ship more of a substance that is causing a problem, that disrupts the future of our children and grandchildren. There are much better things to do."

Suffice it to say this is not the official position of the Liberal government. "I know this is hard for some of you to hear," Guilbeault said, "but I believe it to be the truth."

And in this truth, he included not only pipelines from Alberta but also liquid natural gas in British Columbia and oil and gas development in Quebec. Guilbeault later said it was a "credit" to the Liberals "that they would invite on stage someone who disagrees with them and give that person carte blanche to say whatever he wanted, no strings attached." He

said he sensed some wincing when he told organizers what he planned to say, but he had not been asked to refrain from saying anything. In the hallway after Guilbeault's remarks, Environment Minister Catherine McKenna posed for pictures with the environmentalist and then defended his presence on the main stage. "The good news," she said, "is the Liberal Party wants to hear from a diversity of perspectives." That play was becoming apparent inside the main hall as the convention moved to remarks by Peter Tertzakian, an energy analyst and economist with ARC Financial. Tertzakian said he was "aligned with Steven and others" on the "need to tackle this problem" of climate change. "Where I differ," he explained, "is the route to go." Transitions in energy, he said, "never all or none ... there's often a balance and a mix in an economy." And transitions take time. What's more, he ventured, we should be "proud of all the resources we develop. Because we're good at it." Canadian oil, he said, is "some of the best oil in the world in terms of its responsible development and its cleanliness." "We need to get out and teach the rest of the world and supply the rest of the world with a type of energy through this transition that everyone needs," Tertzakian said. This was something like a cross between Ezra Levant's argument about ethical oil and Trudeau's approach to the question of pipelines. Together, pipelines and climate change amount to the generational and national questions of the moment. And it is these questions that tore a chasm through the middle of the NDP convention last month; Alberta Premier Rachel Notley and the country's only NDP government on one side, Avi Lewis and the Leap

Manifesto on the other. This being the Liberal Party, the matter was handled quietly with a relatively genteel exchange of speeches. Two sides can come away feeling that their views were represented without the party being quite yet tied to a position on any particular project.

This is also in keeping with the Liberal government's repeatedly stated desire to listen and consult at, and before, each and every turn.

It's possible this form has some function; that, in hearing everyone out, the government will be more likely to find acceptable solutions and less likely to be outright condemned for the solutions they eventually settle on. In the meantime, it is a handy way of demonstrating #realchange from the aloof ways of the previous government.

A while after Guilbeault and Tertzakian had taken their turns, the environment minister and the natural resources minister were on stage as part of a session on "how growing Canada's economy and climate change action can go hand in hand."

A more-than-middle-aged man from North Bay, Ontario, stood and told the ministers that the big issue back home was the Energy East pipeline, which is to run under the town's sole source of drinking water. He'd been to a meeting organized by anti-pipeline activists and heard all the "predictable" arguments about what might happen.

There was large group in the audience, he said, "who are reasonable people and who honestly hope that you can grow Canada's economy and at the same time deal with climate change." But how to reconcile these things, how to build

pipelines and meet international climate targets, was a "puzzle," both to him and to other "rational people."

This, Natural Resources Minister Jim Carr said, was a question he and his office deal with on a daily basis. "But," he added, "we have to reconcile different interests all the time in government."

The way to do this, Carr explained, was to set up a process that hears all perspectives.

(Resources were going to have to move somehow, he also noted, and so how to move those resources most safely had to be considered, an implicit argument in favour of pipelines, at least as opposed to rail transport).

Ultimately, he said, the government would have to make a decision.

It's possible the process will get the government closer to a popular decision, but it's also possible it won't. At least not entirely.

This much Carr would seem to concede in response to another question.

Each day in the House of Commons, he said, the government is presented with questions representing the views of four different political parties.

"No single answer is going to satisfy all four of those perspectives, not to mention our own," he said. "The reality of governing and of politics is that you make tough decisions that don't satisfy all the people. Courageous politicians that look generationally at what's best for the country, I think, are the ones we want and, I hope, the ones you've elected."

Possibly even the minister is interested to see what happens after the time for talking is over.

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