Enbridge Inc. Line Three Project Approved

The largest project in Enbridge Inc.'s history, the 1,070 km Line Three Replacement, received a substantial boost on 28 June 2018 when Minnesota Regulators approved the project to upgrade the deteriorating crude oil pipeline through the state. The pipeline replacement will increase Canada’s crude oil export capacity to the United States (US) by 375,000 barrels per day by late 2019 or early 2020. The additional pipeline capacity is expected to relieve some of the transportation bottleneck that has increased the discount on Canadian heavy oil prices compared to US benchmarks.

Alberta Wetland Mitigation Directive

The Government of Alberta released an update to the Alberta Wetland Mitigation Directive on 21 June 2018, the Alberta Wetland Rapid Evaluation Tool – Desktop (ABWRET-D) and an ABWRET-D fact sheet on 29 May 2018. The Wetland Assessment and Impact Form (WAIF) was initially updated on 11 January 2018 and again on 25 May 2018. Highlights are as follows:

- The Alberta Wetland Mitigation Directive was updated to clarify policy scope and applicability as interim/transition policies are superseded. As of 1 June 2018, wetland applications are no longer accepted under the Interim Wetland Policy.
- ABWRET-D is a desktop-based tool to acquire wetland values for low risk activities eligible for a WAIF.
- The WAIF was created to expedite approvals for low risk, temporary impacts and minimal permanent impacts agreed upon by Alberta Environment and Parks (AEP) and the Alberta Energy Regulator (AER).

Pump-Off Temporary Field Authorization Requirements

The pump-off disposal method is a common practice in Alberta to dispose of the clear liquid portion of drilling waste, or for the surface discharge of collected surface run-on/run-off water. The AER has provided recommendations for operators looking to obtain a temporary field authorization (TFA) for pump-off, however it is ultimately up to the AER Land Use Officers to make the decision based on application merit. Additional information could be gathered to support your application and assist the AER in their decision-making process, including but not limited to:

- Collect one soil sample for every 4 hectares of disposal area (can be field tested). Although the results are not required to be submitted with the TFA application, an inspector could request them.
- Ensure a representative sample of the excess clear liquid portion of drilling waste or surface water meets the criteria in AER Directive 055 and Directive 050, or other regulations or approvals as applicable.
- Discharge the excess water onto land surface (frozen or unfrozen soil conditions) in a controlled fashion that does not result in pooling, run-off, erosion, or direct flow into a watercourse or road ditch.
- Ensure the surface discharge area is at least 100 m away from a waterbody and 10 m away from a property line.
- Ensure landowner consent has been obtained prior to surface discharging the excess clear liquid portion of drilling waste or surface water.
- Provide a map of the disposal area with the TFA application, along with the approximate disposal volume.
Wood Buffalo National Park Environment Report

On 28 June 2018, the federal Minister of Environment and Climate Change announced an investment of $27.5 million for the Wood Buffalo National Park World Heritage Site (the Site). The funding is to develop an action plan which will in part, be informed by the findings of a Strategic Environment Assessment (SEA) completed by Parks Canada. The SEA used Indigenous traditional knowledge and science to assess the potential cumulative impacts of all development on the Site and the results highlight concern over the decreasing recharge of lakes and basins within the Peace-Athabasca Delta, which could impact environmental health, river flows, Indigenous use, and wildlife. The SEA is considered to be the most complete assessment on the region downstream of Canada's largest energy developments and one of its biggest hydro dams (Bennett Dam).

BRITISH COLUMBIA

British Columbia Oil and Gas Commission and Agricultural Land Commission Delegation Agreement Updated

On 4 July 2018 the British Columbia (BC) Oil and Gas Commission (OGC) and Agricultural Land Commission (ALC) released an updated Delegation Agreement with changes specific to oil and gas and related ancillary activities in the Peace River Regional District and Northern Rocky Mountains Municipality. Items updated in the agreement include:

- Schedule B report’s submission timelines for pipeline installation
- Appendix I
- Area calculations for powerlines and non-farm use disturbance areas
- Appendix II

Changes became effective immediately and are posted on the BC OGC’s website.

New Interim Measures Applied to Oil and Gas Applications

The Blueberry River First Nations (BRFN) signed a Regional Strategic Environmental Assessment Interim Measures Agreement with the Ministry of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources, the BC OGC, and the Ministry of Forest, Lands, Natural Resources Operations and Rural Development addressing development within the BRFN traditional territory. As of 16 July 2018, interim measures will be applied to new applications that fall within the predetermined critical areas and place emphasis on the restriction of new surface disturbance. Maps outlining the area of interest, as well as the full set of terms and conditions, are available on the BC OGC’s website.

DID YOU KNOW?

Are you interested in using a temporary aboveground pipeline for the conveyance of produced water? It is anticipated that the AER will release guidelines on how to do this, and in the meantime the AER has started issuing approvals!

Contact us to find out more information at Tanya.Cairns@IntegratedSustainability.ca