The benefits of LNG for British Columbia

In many ways we are truly watching history unfold, LNG represents a once in a generation opportunity for British Columbia. We are on the cusp of seeing a new industry take-off that will benefit urban and rural communities across B.C., but this tremendous opportunity still faces numerous challenges ahead. With the federal election sufficiently behind us and a new government installed, it is important for our new federal ministers, as they work hard to get up-to-speed on their many files, to understand the significance of liquefied natural gas (LNG).

While LNG projects are tremendously complex, it is safe to say that without the completion of pipelines to help unlock B.C.'s abundant natural gas reserves, this opportunity will be lost. For this very reason, the BC Chamber of Commerce supports TransCanada's LNG-dedicated natural gas pipeline projects. They are a critical part of this province's future LNG infrastructure requirement.

TransCanada's Prince Rupert Gas Transmission Project and the Coastal GasLink Pipeline Projects represent a combined capital investment of more than $10 billion. These major projects mean current and potential opportunities across the province for professional services, suppliers and contractors, as well as benefits for governments and taxpayers.

During pipeline construction, these two projects are expected to provide approximately 5,000 direct, good-paying, family-supporting jobs. The opportunities for B.C. businesses will not be confined to just construction and technical services, but will also include jobs in other sectors like food and accommodation, trucking and transportation, hardware, and vehicle parts and servicing. Once the pipelines are operational, there will be between 45 and 75 permanent jobs available for northern BC residents.

Ongoing benefits from the pipelines themselves will include an estimated $80 million in annual operating spending. From the construction, there will also be the legacy effect of a more highly skilled and experienced labour force, and a higher level of business capacity in such areas as planning, management and industrial safety. In particular, TransCanada has made a commitment to focus on Aboriginal training, employment and business development during construction, helping Aboriginal businesses and communities to take full advantage of the LNG opportunities to the benefit of their people.

Spanning the traditional territories of numerous First Nations and traversing the province's near northern, rural communities, it is the Chamber's hope that First Nations and northern communities can come together with the support of business and government to seize the opportunity and support the benefits available from these projects.

B.C.'s burgeoning LNG industry has already made a positive difference for local communities and beyond, with hundreds of millions of dollars invested in field studies and engineering work. It's estimated that TransCanada's two pipeline projects alone represent more than half a million hours of field work, with extensive use of local contractors and labour as well as retail and commercial spending

from B.C.'s Peace region all the way to the North Coast.   Not to mention the many community investments that have been made by TransCanada in communities along the pipeline routes.

The BC Chamber's decision to support projects like TransCanada's LNG pipelines reflects widespread support by our local chamber network and their members across northern BC and throughout the province. These projects represent real benefits to the people living in these rural communities as well as to the professional services in our urban centres that support this development. As the new government get their bearings, we should all hope they appreciate the positive course LNG and related pipeline infrastructure investment are taking our province and country.

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