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Ecojustice Media Release

NEB rushes ahead with pipeline - despite legal challenge

SAINT JOHN NB – Friends of Rockwood Park, who have filed legal proceedings challenging the environmental assessment of the controversial Emera Brunswick Pipeline Project, are upset that the National Energy Board (NEB) is rushing to finalize the Pipeline's controversial proposed land-based route. The allegedly unlawful Pipeline approval has yet to be ruled on the Federal Court of Appeal. Only one of five responsible federal agencies -– the NEB itself -- has issued any permits enabling the Pipeline to proceed. Other agencies, like Fisheries & Oceans, have not granted Emera Brunswick Pipeline Company any permits to date.

"The NEB is ploughing ahead to nail down a detailed land-based route, even though the lawfulness of its pipeline approval is still before the Court," said Friends of Rockwood Park spokesperson Dr. Leland Thomas. "By insisting on blasting a route through Rockwood Park, the St. John River and Saint John neighbourhoods, it appears the NEB has firmly closed its mind to considering less harmful impacts of a marine route."

"Before the park and neighbourhoods are put at risk by this pipeline, we believe the NEB should wait for the Court to rule whether the NEB broke the law," said Lara Tessaro, Ecojustice lawyer.

The Friends are urging members of the public with concerns about the route through the City, St. John River and Rockwood Park to attend two public meetings this week.

An Emera Brunswick Pipeline open house is scheduled for 3:30 – 8:00 pm on Tuesday, September 18 at the Milford Memorial Community Centre, to discuss Emera's contingency plan to trench the St. John River between Milford and Pokiok. Each year millions of fish migrate through the St. John River – including threatened Striped Bass and endangered Atlantic Salmon.

An NEB meeting is scheduled for 7PM on Thursday, September 20th, at the Saint John Trade and Convention Centre Market Square. Also on September 20th, Ecojustice lawyer Lara Tessaro will be in court in Ottawa arguing for leave to appeal the NEB's decision. The hearing is set for 9:30 am at the Federal Court of Appeal, 10th Floor, 90 Sparks Street.

In July, Ecojustice (formerly Sierra Legal) launched the lawsuit, arguing that the NEB's assessment of the project was unlawful because it failed to consider environmental effects of a marine pipeline, or the harmful effects of trenching the St. John River.

The proposed 145-kilometre pipeline would cut through the heart of one of Canada's oldest and largest urban parks, Rockwood Park. The proposal has been met with fierce local opposition, including a petition signed by more than 15,000 local residents.

For further information please visit www.ecojustice.ca or contact:
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