FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Northern Gateway decision: an historic victory for the environment

June 30, 2016

Vancouver, BC——BC Nature welcomes the Federal Court of Appeal’s decision today to overturn federal Cabinet’s approval of the Enbridge Northern Gateway pipeline project. BC Nature is a federation of 53 naturalist groups in British Columbia representing over 6,000 members.

BC Nature firmly believes that the Northern Gateway project presents unacceptable risks to British Columbians and to the environment. This project threatens populations of woodland caribou that are already under tremendous pressure from habitat destruction and fragmentation. And a marine oil spill would have catastrophic consequences for communities and ecosystems along the BC coast.

This court decision highlights the need for urgent reform of federal environmental assessment law. “Canadians deserve an environmental assessment process that they can trust,” says Chris Tollefson, counsel to BC Nature. “There are deep-seated flaws in the current review process including inadequate consultation with affected communities and First Nations. Without proper consultation, projects like this will never secure the social licence upon which they must depend.”

Today’s victory will ensure that BC Nature and others will have an opportunity to make submissions to federal Cabinet about the project, including these flaws in the review process, prior to Cabinet making a new decision on the fate of the project.

BC Nature is proud to have been an active participant, along with Nature Canada, in the Northern Gateway review process. Both organizations submitted expert evidence to the panel on potential impacts of this project to woodland caribou and terrestrial and marine birds. They also cross-examined Northern Gateway’s technical experts at panel hearings in Prince George and Prince Rupert.

In October 2014, BC Nature joined First Nations and other conservation groups in this successful legal challenge against federal Cabinet’s approval of the Northern Gateway project.

“BC Nature is committed to providing a voice on conservation and environmental issues across BC,” says Dr. Alan Burger, President of BC Nature. “Today’s win is a big victory for the environment, and we are proud to have played a part in it.”
MEDIA CONTACTS

Alan Burger
President of BC Nature
(250) 378-2468
aburger@uvic.ca

Chris Tollefson
Counsel for BC Nature
(250) 888-6074
tollef@uvic.ca