



MEDIA RELEASE

September 28, 2016 – Vancouver: The Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment (CAPE) is deeply disappointed to learn that the federal cabinet has chosen to approve construction of the Pacific North West LNG (PNW LNG) processing facility on Lelu Island. This \$36 billion project will take methane gas – extracted by extensive fracking operations in northeastern BC and transported by pipeline across the province to the coast – and liquefy it for transportation across the Pacific Ocean to buyers in Asia and elsewhere. Proceeding with the Pacific Northwest LNG facility will act as an incentive for massive expansion of fracking operations in northeastern BC.

This approval comes just weeks after over 180 physicians, medical students, and other health professionals wrote an open letter to the Federal Ministers of Health, the Environment, and Indigenous and Northern Affairs asking them to reject the PNW LNG project until its human health impacts had been fully understood, communicated, and addressed.

"We are extremely disappointed by the decision of our federal government supporting this project," offered CAPE member Dr. Larry Barzelai, a family physician from Vancouver. "As Canadians, we were so proud of our government when it committed to a global warming target of 1.5 degrees rather than the 2.0 degrees agreed to by most other countries. We thought that our new government would take climate change seriously but decisions such as this make it appear that they are simply paying lip service to this important issue."

"The human and environmental health effects of fracking, on which LNG is based, have recently been shown to be far more grave than the federal or provincial governments have acknowledged," said CAPE co-founding Board member Dr. Warren Bell, a family physician in Salmon Arm. "The vast majority of the public health studies directed at fracking have identified red flags."

"This project alone will make it essentially impossible for BC to meet its own climate targets," said CAPE Board member Dr. Courtney Howard. "The World Health Organization describes climate change as the biggest health threat of the 21st century. In Canada, we are already seeing the health effects of climate change with the spread of Lyme Disease, high temperatures in the South, an increasing number of wildfires, and dangerously decreased ice stability in the North."

CAPE also believes that the utmost care must be taken to honour the right of Aboriginal people to health and to full, prior, and informed consent with respect to development on their traditional lands. This project does not meet that requirement.

Contact:

CAPE office: (416) 306-2273 ext. 1