
FACTSHEET

January 6, 2025

Environmental Assessment Office

Determination of substantial start for Prince Rupert Gas Transmission project

- On November 19, 2024, Prince Rupert Gas Transmission Ltd. (PRGT) submitted a request to the Environmental Assessment Office (EAO) for a determination of whether or not the PRGT pipeline project has been substantially started.
- The EAO completed its environmental assessment of the project in 2014 and PRGT was issued an environmental assessment certificate, which had an initial substantial start deadline of five years and was extended for a further five years.
- An environmental assessment certificate is required for a project to proceed, along with subsequent authorizations such as permits.
- The certificate requires that the PRGT project be substantially started by November 25, 2024.

Next steps

- The EAO is now gathering evidence on activities that have taken place related to project construction up to November 25, 2024. This includes documentation submitted by PRGT and on-site inspections on November 26 and 27, 2024 by EAO compliance and enforcement officers.
- PRGT has advised the EAO that it has demobilized construction activities at this time. Only construction activities up to November 25, 2024 will be considered in the determination of substantial start.
- The EAO is engaging with First Nations with overlapping interests along the pipeline route to gather additional information from them relevant to the substantial start determination.
- The determination is an administrative decision based on the assessment of on-site evidence, project documentation and relevant information from First Nations. Public comment periods are not held during a substantial start determination process.
- The EAO will then prepare a report to inform the minister's opinion as to whether the project was substantially started by the deadline. The minister may delegate this decision to the EAO's Chief Executive Assessment Officer, but this has not yet been determined.
- The EAO expects to submit its final report to the decision-maker in the spring of 2025.
- If the project is determined to have been substantially started, the certificate remains in effect for the life of the project (unless cancelled or suspended). If the decision-maker finds the project is not substantially started, the certificate expires and the project cannot proceed without a new environmental assessment and new certificate granted.

Considerations for determining a project substantially started

- Determining whether a project is substantially started is made on a case-by-case basis, considering all relevant facts related to the project.

- Substantial start considerations primarily focus on physical activities on a project site, and the decision-maker may also consider other activities, such as expenditures, contracts or agreements, studies, permits and engineering and architectural plans.

Project background

- The PRGT project was assessed by the EAO and issued an environmental assessment certificate in 2014 for an approximately 900-kilometre natural gas pipeline to run between Hudson's Hope in northeastern B.C. and Lelu Island near Prince Rupert (the site of a previously proposed, but since cancelled, LNG processing facility). The project includes both land and marine sections of pipeline, along with compressor and metering stations.
- Potentially impacted First Nations were consulted during the environmental assessment.
- The PRGT project was acquired from TC Energy Corporation by Nisga'a Nation and Western LNG in March 2024 to supply natural gas to the proposed Ksi Lisims LNG facility, a project the EAO is currently assessing.
- PRGT recently applied to the EAO to change the pipeline route to end at the Ksi Lisims LNG site on Pearse Island. The EAO is currently also assessing this amendment request, along with a second amendment request from PRGT to reroute the eastern portion of the pipeline between Chetwynd and Mackenzie to shorten it by about 50 kilometres and follow part of existing cleared rights of way.
- The PRGT pipeline would transport approximately 2 billion cubic feet of natural gas per day, with capacity to expand to about 3.6 billion cubic feet per day.

Learn more:

EAO Substantial Start Determination Policy

https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/environment/natural-resource-stewardship/environmental-assessments/guidance-documents/2018-act/substantially_started_determination_policy_final.pdf

2018 Environmental Assessment Act

<https://www.bclaws.gov.bc.ca/civix/document/id/complete/statreg/18051>

EAO's Prince Rupert Gas Transmission project information webpage

<https://projects.eao.gov.bc.ca/p/588511d9aaecd9001b826b33/project-details>