Ministry of Energy Top Issues - May 17, 2016

From: "Cvjeticanin, Dan (ENERGY)" <dan.cvjeticanin@ontario.ca>
To: "@ENERGY All" <energy-all2@msgov.gov.on.ca>
Date: Wed, 17 May 2017 07:00:31 -0400

Good morning,

Here's what's making news:

- Oil is still our Trump card; KXL approval document shows U.S. dependence -- National Post, pg. FP1
- National Energy Board won't be shielded from political winds; Shifting national priorities and politics see to it that the National Energy Board remains a target of some criticism – theglobeandmail.com
- Company pleads guilty -- Northumberland Today.com
- Liberal plan questioned; Conservatives, NDP say electricity bills will increase following temporary relief – The Belleville Intelligencer, pg. A3
- Prince homeowners could save 3/4 of their heating bill if project goes ahead – Sootoday.com
- Percentages don't add up on Hydro bill: Selwyn resident – Peterborough This Week, pg. 1
- Huron-Bruce MPP Proposes Relief For Small Business | Tory MPP Lisa Thompson proposes amendment to remove Debt Retirement Charge from small business energy bills. – Bayshore Broadcasting News Centre
- More Details on Utility Meeting } There will be opportunities for the public to ask questions and offer comments on the future of Wasaga Distribution – Bayshore Broadcasting Centre
- NDP to vote against Liberal government's hydro bill plan – Northern Daily News (Kirkland Lake), pg. A5
- Nuclear waste shipments underway – Sarnia Observer, pg. A1
- National Energy Board launches new online tracking tool – Burnaby Now, pg. A10

Oil is still our Trump card; KXL approval document shows U.S. dependence

National Post

2017-05-17

Byline: Claudia Cat Taneo Section: Financial Post Page: FP1 / Front

As part of posturing to extract better terms on NAFTA, U.S.

President Donald Trump has warned **Canada** he's unhappy with many aspects of the deal, including - and surprisingly - energy.

But a document by the U.S. State Department on the reasons behind his approval of the Keystone XL pipeline tells a different story: It shows deep appreciation for Canadian oil and for the friendship between the two countries.

“A more robust statement (by the U.S.) of the importance of oil from Canada you will seldom see,” said former Canadian ambassador to the United States Derek Burney, who has argued that Canadian energy has become so important to its southern neighbour it should be used by Canada as trump card in the renegotiation of the North American Free Trade Agreement.

The document also says the main reason former President Barack Obama rejected the project - that it would have undercut its ability to influence other countries on climate change policy - is no longer valid because much progress has been made globally since.

The 31-page Record of Decision and National Interest Determination on KXL was signed by Thomas A. Shannon, Jr., Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, on March 23, the day before Trump handed TransCanada Corp. CEO Russ Girling a presidential permit to build KXL from Hardisty, Alta, to Steele City, Neb. to transport 830,000 barrels per day of predominantly Canadian oil to the U.S.

The document says Canada‘s role as the largest and fastest-growing source of U.S. crude imports “cannot be dismissed.”

The United States imported 3.17 million barrels a day of crude oil from Canada in 2016, which accounted for more than 43 per cent of total imports, it says.

U.S. domestic production growth from tight oil formations, which is predominantly light crude, continues to supplant the majority of international alternatives, but U.S. imports of Canadian crude oil are increasing and a growing share is reaching markets by rail, it says.

“Canadian oil is a relatively stable and secure source of energy supply for many reasons, and few countries share all of the political or physical characteristics that enable Canada to remain in this position,” the document says.

“The Canadian oil sector is efficiently run, without undue political interference. Canadian oilsands projects have low production decline rates compared to conventional oil fields, providing greater geologic certainty of future supply levels.

Moreover, as the Canadian government's conditional **approval** of the Trans Mountain pipeline illustrates, **failure** to approve new transboundary pipeline infrastructure may redirect this source of reliable supply to Asian markets."

The department also says the project by itself is unlikely to significantly impact the level of greenhouse gas emission-intensive extraction of oilsands crude or the continued demand for heavy crude oil at U.S. refineries because the dominant drivers of oilsands development are more global than any single infrastructure project.

In its previous 2015 decision to **reject** the project, the same department found that **approval** at that time would have "undercut the credibility and influence of the United States in urging other countries to address climate change," the document says.

But since then, there have been numerous developments related to global action to address climate change, including announcements by many countries of their plans to do so, the document says.

The document also says the U.S. State Department understands the importance of the project for **Canada** and places **great** significance on maintaining strong bilateral relations.

After nine years of regulatory reviews, KXL faces a final hurdle: the Nebraska Public Service Commission is holding its own assessment into the project's route through the state and is expected to hand down a decision by Nov. 23.

The State Department document reflects many of the arguments made by **Canada**'s oil industry and by the previous Conservative government in support of the pipeline.

But there is an obvious **problem** with using Canadian oil and gas as a trump card in NAFTA - the current federal Liberal government is so invested in **renewable energy** it doesn't put as much value on Canadian oil and gas as the U.S. does.

National Energy Board won't be shielded from political winds; Shifting national priorities and politics see to it that the National Energy Board remains a target of some criticism

theglobeandmail.com

Tue May 16 2017, 5:14pm ET

Section: Business

Byline: Jeffrey Jones

The National Energy Board's identity crisis won't be fixed easily.

It's a problem that's snowballed over at least a decade, to the point where pipeline hearings have become noisy skirmishes and the board's decisions are routinely criticized for ignoring some environmental impacts, notably climate, or excluding voices.

A new report from a government-appointed panel looking into how to reverse eroding public confidence in the regulator contains a number of recommendations aimed at pulling it into modern times.

It's a laudable goal, but the agency, which weighs major energy infrastructure projects and makes sure they operate safely, will never please everyone. Shifting national priorities and politics see to it that the board remains a target of some criticism.

In the document, the five-member panel, assembled by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's Liberal government, spells out in no uncertain terms the NEB's crumbling credibility with Canadians. A major problem, it says, is widespread belief that the NEB has been co-opted by the oil and gas industry - that approvals of contentious pipeline projects are almost a foregone conclusion.

Some of that gripe comes from the fact that the board is staffed by Calgary-based industry experts who, by definition, have experience in the sector and therefore are biased toward it.

Not helping its case were allegations of bias in the approval process for TransCanada Corp.'s $15-billion Energy East pipeline that knocked the proceedings embarrassingly off course.

The panel recommends more inclusive, expansive and lengthy consideration of projects to help calm the public fears. That's risky. Proponents could find it takes so long that their business cases evaporate due to market changes before they can begin digging. Confidence, among investors in this case, would suffer.

So, it's a tricky balance.

First, the Expert Panel on the Modernization of the National Energy Board recommends nothing less than a national energy strategy. The report calls for a blueprint that brings in social, economic and environmental considerations in consultation with the provinces and Indigenous peoples - a set of principles that square oil sands development with climate-change-fighting efforts to guide to the regulator's actions.

This would presumably prevent such debates from erupting at hearings for specific applications, but it seems akin to asking for the sun, moon and stars. The concept has bedevilled politicians, especially Alberta premiers, for years.

In the last month alone, Canadians have watched Kinder Morgan's Trans Mountain expansion project - which has its federal approvals - re-emerge as a hot political issue in the British Columbia election and threaten relations between that province and Alberta. Politics is never too far when it comes to energy development.

The panel also recommends the board - which would be renamed the Canadian Energy Transmission Commission - undertake a new process for decisions on major projects that includes a year to come up with whether the application is in the national interest, then another two years of environmental assessment.

In 2012, the Harper government put a 15-month deadline on proceedings and also gave Ottawa the power to turn a "no" from the board to a "yes" if the federal cabinet determined a project was in the public interest.

As far as perceptions that the NEB has become a part of the home team in energy development, the panel suggests some functions be moved out of Calgary, including the board of directors, which would be located in Ottawa to bolster "representativeness."

Alberta Premier Rachel Notley was less than thrilled with the idea when asked about it on Tuesday: "Just let me just say that moving the NEB to Eastern Canada is dumb. We are absolutely opposed to that and it shouldn't happen."

Natural Resources Minister Jim Carr welcomed the report, but said the government will consult more with Canadians about how to overhaul the board. He's got time.

Any changes won't affect the Energy East proposal, and Ottawa has already approved oil pipelines including Trans Mountain and Enbridge's Line 3 replacement.

It could be many years before there’s another major pipeline application to argue about.

Company pleads guilty

Northumberland Today.com

2017-05-17

Byline: Valerie Macdonald Section: News Page: A1 / Front

A Toronto-area-based numbered company has pleaded guilty to three environmental charges related to water running off a huge solar farm site near Baltimore and into two streams in 2014.

The company, 2280577 Ontario Inc., was fined a total of $600,000 in Cobourg’s Ontario Court of Justice on Monday.

The fine represents about 10% of the contract to construct the solar farm, prosecutor Paul McCulloch said, adding it was consistent with fines for similar situations.

Despite that, solar farm neighbour Marie Elise Henry described the fine as a “slap on the wrist” and was disappointed with the outcome of the case which has dragged on for three years, she said, before being settled.

She was one of the nearby property owners who attended Hamilton Township council sessions several years ago to complain about how water was rushing off the multi-acre site from denuded hillsides, eroding neighbouring properties during construction of the massive, ground-mount solar farm, as well as washing out roadways and putting silt into tributaries of both Baltimore and Brook creeks.

The instances, as described in court by the prosecutor, began on April 2, 2014 and continued until Oct. 29, 2014.

The Ministry of Environment responded to the citizens' complaints over this period, investigated, returned multiple times, ordered improved site erosion control, and ultimately a lengthy list of charges were laid under the Ontario Water Resources Act against Canadian Solar Solutions which was awarded the solar farm contract through the Green Energy Act process, who contracted out to AAB Inc., who in turn contracted out to AECOM Canada Ltd. and then finally to 2280577 Ontario Inc. (formerly Naylor Renewable Energy Inc.

Hamilton General Partners 1 and 2 Inc. also faced a charge each of contravening the Environmental Protection Act.

After two pre-trial conferences with Justice of the Peace Joan Glover involving the Ministry and companies involved, the numbered company pleaded guilty to three of the 13 charges on the indictment.

The numbered company was fined $375,000 for allowing the discharge of contaminated storm water into two tributaries from the solar farm at 2720 Payne Road in Hamilton Township between April 2 and June 11, 2014 which brought silt potentially harming aquatic life and damaging cold-water fish breeding grounds for two kilometres into the Brook Creek tributary and four kilometres into Baltimore Creek, according to information read into the court record by McCulloch. The $125,000 fine was for failing to notify the Ministry of the discharge as required, he said.

The last charge of failing to employ best practices to prevent sediment to run off site and erosion to occur cost the numbered company a further $100,000 for a total of $600,000.

Charges against all the other companies were dropped as it was shown they did due diligence in monitoring the contract and it was the numbered company that failed to react to Ministry orders. As part of remedial work undertaken by AAB to meet increased Ministry requirements to stop erosion over $11-million was spent by the company to add five more retention pounds to control and filer water going off the solar farm site, and restoring the water courses, the court heard.

The entire contract was worth $7-to-8 million to the numbered company and the prosecutor said because of the on-going erosion situation and attempts to mitigate it, no one made any money.

The numbered company had never built a solar facility like this before, the court was also told.

Liberal plan questioned; Conservatives, NDP say electricity bills will increase following temporary relief

The Belleville Intelligencer
Wed May 17 2017
Page: A3
Section: News
Byline: Jason Miller

Ontario’s hydro rates have electrified another surge of partisan rhetoric a year ahead of the next election.

Mere days after the Progressive Conservatives leaked cabinet documents in an effort to bore holes in the Liberals’plan to reduce hydro rates by 25 per cent, the New Democrats, too, have come out swinging, with leader Andrea Horwath signalling they will not be voting in favour of the cuts.

“A little bit of temporary relief is going to turn into a huge increase,” Horwath told The Intelligencer.

At the heart of the contention is the Liberals'announcement they will set up a special purpose financial entity to manage the borrowing of billions of dollars to fund the cuts.

Interest payments would fall on the shoulders of Ontarians, with ratepayers picking up the tab for an estimated $25 billion in interest over 30 years, in an effort to lower rates this year.

Prince Edward-Hastings MPP Todd Smith was behind the leak.

"We were the ones who released the cabinet document last Thursday. I had received them from a whistleblower who was upset the government was talking about providing instant relief when really what they're doing is making the problem worse," Smith said. "What the document shows is, after the next election, electricity bills will start to skyrocket again."

Smith said the documents reveal the Liberals setting up a debt entity at Ontario Power Generation OPG.

"We will see the debt retirement charge returning to electricity bills in the mid-2020s," he said. "They're taking the cost of the global adjustment off the bills and they're moving that cost over to the new debt ($25 billion) entity at OPG. Customers are going to pay the interest on the new debt they're creating."

The Liberals say the aim of the proposed Fair Hydro Plan is to give people a break on rates now, but Horwath told The Intelligencer there is no concrete plan to put a lid on the root cause of the increases and the "borrowing scheme" is simply a political ploy to revive the premier's slumping ratings.

"Her plan is going to have those rates start soaring in about three or four years time," said Horwath. "All she's doing is borrowing money to try to get her through the next election."

Files from the leaked document suggest rates will fall this year, increasing by an average of about two per cent over the next four years, before jumping 6.5 per cent annually.

Energy Minister Glenn Thibeault has called the leaked documents outdated, dismissing claims rates will only hike.

Horwath has promised to cut hydro rates a minimum 30 per cent if she wins the June 7, 2018 polls.

The Liberals haven't wasted any time before taking shots at Horwath's plan.

“Their biggest idea - buying more than $4 billion worth of Hydro One shares on the stock market - will not take one cent off electricity bills,” a release sent to The Intelligencer newsroom stated. “Other alleged savings rely on a vague, yet-to-be determined ‘expert panel’to be convened sometime in the future. And they’re banking on lengthy, uncertain negotiations with the federal government for supposed reductions as well.”

Despite Ontario’s Fair Hydro Plan helping families, businesses, and farms across the province - including in Belleville - Horwath said the “NDP can’t and won’t vote in favour of this” during a press conference this morning,” the Liberal release stated.

Horwath responded, saying selling off Hydro One is going to make hydro bills go up even further.

Prince homeowners could save 3/4 of their heating bill if project goes ahead

Sootoday.com
2017-05-16
Byline: Kenneth Armstrong

The long wait for access to natural gas may be over soon for residents of Prince Township homeowners.

Union Gas held an information session at the Prince Township Community Centre last night in advance of an Ontario Energy Board (OEB) decision on the company’s proposed expansion to the 1,010 residents of the township.

About 80 residents came out for last night's session.

“The project is not a project until we get OEB approval,” said Chris Minor, district manager for Union Gas.

If approved, the proposed $2.7 million project may begin construction as early as August of this year.

In its filing to the OEB, Union Gas forecasts that 291 homes and commercial businesses in Prince Township will be hooked up for natural gas service by the tenth year of the project.

Union Gas estimates the annual heating and water heating bill with their service to be about $1,090, which they contrast with their estimate of heating the same sized house with electric baseboard heating at $4,089 per year.

For a 22-year period, each Union Gas customer in Prince Township will contribute about $500 yearly as a System Expansion Surcharge toward the project, which Minor said will come out of their savings from switching to natural gas.

A customer who signs up on day one and continues with the service will end up contributing a total of $11,000 toward the project over the span of that 22 years.

Ken Lamming, mayor of Prince Township, said he has been working on making natural gas available to residents for about five years.

“Oil is expensive, electricity is expensive, propane is expensive — at least this gives you a chance to have a cheaper fuel. It’s better for the seniors or people with low income, and it’s handy,” said Lamming.

No residents are locked into a commitment, said Lamming, and residents can choose to wait five or 10 years before signing up to avoid paying some of the System Expansion Surcharge.

Additionally, the township has agreed to fully reimburse all municipal taxes which will be owed by the utility over a 10 year period.

“If we don’t get it, we’re not paying the taxes anyway, so we’re not losing anything. It helps the people of Prince. As a council we look at ways to help people and this was the best way,” said Lamming.

Longtime resident Sam Iacones said he has waited about 30 years for the chance to hook his house up to natural gas.

"This time it looks serious, like it actually might happen," said Iacones.

The company and township will find out in the fall if the project is eligible for grant money from the provincial government, intended for natural gas expansion projects into rural and remote communities.

“Union Gas and Prince Township are going to work together to secure federal funding, but we don’t know if we are going to be successful yet,” said Minor.

In total, about 22 kilometres of natural gas pipe will be laid along Second Line West, Base Line Road, Airport Road, Gagnon Road, Walls Road, Deans Road, Mountainview Drive, Heywood Road, Douglas Drive, Ironside Drive, Pinder Drive and Harper Street.

Percentages don't add up on Hydro bill: Selwyn resident

Peterborough This Week

Thu May 11 2017

Page: 1

Section: News

For one Selwyn resident, the cost of hydro has him questioning how Hydro One calculates his bill.

A letter from Mayo Schmidt, Hydro One’s president, states 51 per cent of a bill pays for electricity, while 12 per cent goes to federal sales tax and 37 per cent is a delivery charge.

But according to Paul Jackson, these figures don’t add up to what is on his bill.

“I’ve done all the figuring and I’m no accountant, but it’s simple math and Hydro One is being dishonest,” says Jackson.

His bill shows his electricity use, delivery charge, regulatory charges and HST, then subtracts a eight-per-cent provincial rebate.

When he tries to calculate his bill based on the letter’s guidelines, he gets a different set of numbers.

“When I add my actual usage from my meter readings, I only get a fraction of what is on my bill,” says Jackson. “I also cannot see how the company factors in the 12 per cent.”

“HST is 13 per cent,” he adds.

Jackson’s home is in a medium-density area and, according to the Hydro One, each area is calculated differently. Even when he uses those numbers, his bill comes out lower.

Even though the Wynne government announced a 25-per-cent decrease on hydro bills that goes into effect this summer, Jackson says it's not enough.

Tiziana Baccega-Rosa, senior media relations for Hydro One, says Ontario Hydro uses a graph that indicates how Hydro One's portion of the bill is 37 cents of a dollar.

"It's based on 2017 rates for a medium-density residential customer consuming 750 kWh per month," says Baccega-Rosa.

"The calculations for the delivery charge also includes a cost for line losses based on amount consumed and the average cost of electricity," she says. "This is collected on behalf of the IESO (Independent Electricity System Operator)."

Baccega-Rosa encourages anyone with concerns about their hydro bill to call the customer care team to have issues resolved.

Huron-Bruce MPP Proposes Relief For Small Business | Tory MPP Lisa Thompson proposes amendment to remove Debt Retirement Charge from small business energy bills.

Bayshore Broadcasting News Centre
2017-05-17
Byline: Peter Jackson

Huron-Bruce Tory MPP Lisa Thompson is challenging the Liberal government to ease the burden on small businesses, through her proposed amendment to the Electricity Act.

Under the legislation, the debt retirement charge would be wiped off the Hydro bills of small commercial enterprises.

Thompson says the Liberal government collected $859 million from the charge to small businesses in 2015-16.

The debt retirement charge was taken off residential Hydro bills in 2011.

The Auditor General that year reported that the charges earned the Ontario Electricity Financial Corporation enough to pay off Hydro One's $7.8 billion in stranded debt.

Thompson quotes the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, which says the debt retirement charge represents two to five per-cent of businesses' Hydro bills, regardless of the size.

More Details on Utility Meeting } There will be opportunities for the public to ask questions and offer comments on the future of Wasaga Distribution

Bayshore Broadcasting News Centre

2017-05-16

Byline: Ken Hashizume

The Town of Wasaga beach have released details of the upcoming information session regarding the future of Wasaga Distribution.

It will go at the RecPlex on Mosley Street next Wednesday evening from 6:30 until 9:30.

The evening is intended to provide stakeholders with a balanced range of information.

Planner Don May of Almost There Incorporated will be the moderator.

A panel of experts will speak on the different aspects of the energy sector between 6:40 and 7:15.

There will be two 45-minute sessions where those in attendance will be able to ask questions and offer comments.

People wishing to comment about Wasaga Distribution prior to the meeting can do so by e-mailing wasagahydroreview@wasagabeach.com.

Written comments can also be sent to the Town of Wasaga Beach offices on Lewis Street.

NDP to vote against Liberal government's hydro bill plan

Northern Daily News (Kirkland Lake)
Wed May 17 2017
Page: A5
Section: Ontario News

Ontario NDP Leader Andrea Horwath says her party will vote against the Liberal government’s plan to lower hydro bills, calling it a ploy to buy votes for the next provincial election.

Under legislation tabled last week, Ontarians will see lowered hydro bills for the next 10 years before paying higher costs for the following 20 years.

Horwath says Ontarians can’t afford the plan.

She cited a Liberal cabinet document leaked to the Progressive Conservatives last week, which contains a projection that electricity bills will drop this year, rise slightly for four years while increases are limited to the rate of inflation, and then rise quickly after that.

Premier Kathleen Wynne says the figures in that document are out of date, but the government isn't ready to release updated numbers.

Horwath is accusing the government of hiding information from the public and is calling on the government to release all of its projections about how much the hydro plan will cost in the long run.

Horwath also says the government is giving the public no time to give feedback on the plan as it's attempting to get the legislation passed before the House rises for the summer.

"I think people knew that, one way or another, they'd pay the prices for Premier Wynne's latest move on hydro, but the costs Wynne is expecting us all to take on with this plan is truly disgusting," Horwath said.

The hydro legislation will lower time-of-use rates by removing from bills a portion of the global adjustment, a charge consumers pay for above-market rates to power producers. For the next 10 years, a new entity overseen by Ontario Power Generation will take on debt to pay that difference.

Then, the cost of paying back that debt with interest - which the government says will be up to $28 billion - will go back onto ratepayers'bills for the next 20 years as a "Clean Energy Adjustment."

Horwath acknowledged that the Liberal majority government can implement their plan, even with her party and the Progressive Conservatives opposed. - The Canadian Press

Nuclear waste shipments underway

Sarnia Observer
Wed May 17 2017
Page: A1 / Front
Section: News
Byline: Tyler Kula
Source: Sarnia Observer

Opposition groups are sounding the alarm as truckloads of liquid nuclear waste have started arriving in the

U.S. from Ontario's Chalk River Nuclear Lab.

Between 100 and 150 loads of the highly radioactive material, packed in puncture-and thermal-tested casks, are expected to move over four years - potentially across the Blue Water Bridge - in armed convoys to the Savannah River Site in South Carolina for solidification, opponents say.

Crossing into New York from Ontario is the most direct path, but the U.S. Department of Energy has said the routes will vary for security reasons.

"I wouldn't want to be stopped in traffic sitting beside that," said Joanne Rogers, chief of the Aamjiwnaang First Nation. "What if there was an explosion? What if it got into an accident on the bridge? It goes into our water."

In February, the Anishanabek Nation Grand Council, representing Aamjiwnaang and 39 other Ontario communities, and the Iroquois Caucus released statements opposing the plan by U.S. and Canadian governments to truck the 23,000 litres of nuclear waste south.

Critics have questioned why the solidification isn't done in Canada, to lower the risk of contaminating drinking water in case of a spill.

"There's just so much that everybody should be concerned about," said Rogers.

Meanwhile, a memo made public May 12 from the U.S. Defence Nuclear Facilities Safety Board (DNFSB) notes the first shipment happened the week of April 21, and one container the waste was transferred into in South Carolina didn't provide adequate radiation shielding.

"Just that the shipments had begun is newsworthy enough, we think, but lo and behold, they had a problem with the transfer from the shipping cask," said Kevin Kamps, an activist with anti-nuclear group Beyond Nuclear.

Sarnia Mayor Mike Bradley Tuesday renewed his concern about the risk to the Great Lakes.

"We could be one of the crossings," he said, noting another major concern is inadequate long-term planning by the nuclear industry.

”(It) has made billions (of dollars) over the years creating power, and they never appeared to have a long-term plan on how to deal with all these materials and do it safely,” he said.

Kamps has called the truckloads of waste, including weapons-grade uranium and radioactive materials generated by medical isotope production, “mobile Chernobyls on steroids.”

Returning the uranium to the U.S. stems from Ottawa’s 2012 commitment to repatriate weapons-based material for liability and nuclear non-proliferation reasons, according to the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission.

Shipping it in liquid form is unprecedented, Kamps has said.

The transaction comes with a $60-million payout from Atomic Energy Canada Ltd. for processing and management, an AECL spokesperson said last summer, noting Canada lacks the technology and facilities to reprocess the material.

National Energy Board launches new online tracking tool

Burnaby Now
Wed May 17 2017
Page: A10
Section: City
Byline: Tereza Verenca
Source: Burnaby Now

The National Energy Board (NEB) has launched a new online tool that allows users to track the 157 conditions it has imposed on Kinder Morgan.

The mandatory conditions must be met before the company can proceed with its $7.4-billion Edmonton-to-Burnaby pipeline.

“From early feedback, it seems to be a very handy tool, and other projects may use it going forward,” said

NEB spokesperson James Stevenson in an email to the NOW. “We’re using the same software in our pipeline profiles page that was released last month, which enables Canadians to see what is moving through the larger pipelines in our country and to learn more about the major NEB-regulated systems.”

But Kennedy Stewart, MP for Burnaby South and a longtime opponent of the pipeline, called the new tool “a joke.” Last month, Stewart and Mayor Derek Corrigan complained residents were having trouble filing their statements of opposition, and pointed to an outdated and confusing NEB website.

“We know from the thousands of people from Burnaby who tried to get in … The website crashed often; it was almost impossible to navigate, and only now are they looking at doing improvements,” said the MP. “That’s going to be a little bit of sand in the eye for the people in Burnaby seeing the NEB is doing these improvements only after all the important decisions have been made.”

A report released this week, written by a panel of experts appointed by the prime minister, suggests the NEB should be replaced with a new organization called the Canadian Energy Transmission Commission and that a new Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency be created.