

Press release
For immediate release

Pipeline Enbridge 9B: Citoyens au Courant and environmental groups ask the NEB to justify its position concerning hydrostatic testing

Montreal, May 27 2015 – **Citoyens au Courant, Equiterre, l'Association Québécoise de Lutte Contre la Pollution Atmosphérique (AQLPA), Environnement Jeunesse (ENJEU), Climate Justice Montréal, Nature Québec, Sierra Club Québec and Environmental Defence** officially made a [request to the NEB yesterday to reveal whether it plans to force Enbridge to implement hydrostatic testing on pipeline 9B](#). These groups have participated in public hearings on the flow reversal project for pipeline Enbridge 9B in 2013.

The flow reversal project means the 40 year old pipeline will be used to transport diluted bitumen from the tar sands through Ontario and Quebec. The project was approved by the NEB in March 2014 and Enbridge plans to start operations in June 2015.

“The NEB is responsible for evaluating pipeline projects. It claims to be transparent and to listen to what the public is saying, yet despite having all the required information in their possession for over 6 months, it refuses to render a written and reasoned decision on whether or not it will impose hydrostatic tests on the length of pipeline 9B” worries Lorraine Caron of Citoyens au Courant.

Hydrostatic tests are water pressure tests that detect small corrosion holes and microcracks in a pipeline that can go undetected by other leak detection systems for years, and that can lead to major rupture. Pipeline 9B crosses dozens of major waterways in Quebec and Ontario, and numerous voices have been raised since 2012 to ask the NEB to impose these tests on the pipeline (Équiterre, Ontario Ministry of Energy, Québec’s Commission de l’agriculture des pêcheries de l’énergie et des ressources naturelles, twenty or so municipalities and regional councils, the Communauté métropolitaine de Montréal (CMM), etc.).

Karine Péloffy, director of the Centre québécois du droit de l’environnement, is assisting the groups in this judicial procedure. She says, “The NEB as a quasi-judicial court has the responsibility and obligation to divulge an official decision so that its motives can be analysed and weighed by the public.”

For Equiterre’s executive director Steven Guilbeault, “Refusing to make a decision public means the NEB wants to keep the public in a state of ignorance. This only contributes to diminishing public confidence in the NEB.”

According to Enbridge’s own data, a major pipeline rupture at the Ottawa River would result in a spill of 957 000 litres in 13 minutes. [Another study](#) (Savaria

Report, French only) carried out for the CMM concerning the Energy East project reveals that an oil leak in the Ottawa River could not only endanger the aquatic ecosystem, but could also deprive a large part of Montreal's population of their drinking water.

Although the Quebec government has also asked the NEB to render and justify its decision on hydrostatic testing, it has not yet clearly stated whether it is in favour of asking for these tests. However, the government can be expected to state its position by mid-June when the Unité de vigilance permanente sur les hydrocarbures publishes its report.

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For further information please contact Lorraine Caron, member of Les Citoyens au Courant at 514-577-2644
Geneviève Puskas, Équiterre, 514-792-5222

For legal information please contact Me Karine Péloffy, Director General of the Centre québécois du droit de l'environnement at 514-746-6597.