

ECONEWS #225

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THE ECO-PERSONALS

\$5 a line. Max 5 printed lines, non-profits, low-income free. 1" box ad \$50

* Nature-based counseling and healing RaineyHopewell.ca 250-380-5055

* Climate-savvy Wordpress website administrator wanted for weekly updates at www.westcoastclimateequity.org Call Dorothy Cutting, 250-537-5853

* Looking for people willing to support a blockade of coal exports from BC. Peter Nix, 250-748-7954

* Volunteers wanted TLC Picnic at Sooke Potholes, Sat June 9th 1-877-485-2422

HAPPY CHILDREN & PARENTS

Reside in Pacific Gardens, Nanaimo
Amenities include music, woodwork
& guest rooms, garden plots
1-2-3 BR units available
250-754-3060
www.pacificgardens.ca



RIO+20
United Nations
Conference on
Sustainable
Development

THE RIO EARTH SUMMIT

The big Rio Earth Summit is coming up on June 20-22nd, 20 years after the first Earth Summit. Our planet faces enormous challenges when it comes to protecting the atmosphere, forests, oceans, topsoil, fresh water and species that sustain our very existence, so a global gathering of the world's leaders ought to be the very thing that is needed to get us on track and create

a sense of hope, resulting in a practical course of action to address the many challenges.

The Summit has established two main themes. They are the development of a sustainable green economy that also addresses the eradication of poverty, and a streamlined institutional framework to help the world achieve its sustainable development goals.

There are some great objectives, but progress towards agreement on the negotiating text is painfully slow, and expectations are currently falling through the floor. At one point, the text ballooned to 6,000 pages before being cut back to 80 pages. There's no sign of and end to the constant disagreements between the North and the South, no sense of urgency, and no sign that key national leaders will attend.

Alongside the official Summit thousands of people from NGOs and businesses will also attend, including 15-year old Tessa Owens from Victoria, the youngest member of the Canadian delegation, and Naomi Devine, who left Victoria in February to cycle all the way to Mexico and then ride the bus to Rio. They are both with We Canada, which is mobilizing Canadians to take action for the Summit and wants Canada to commit to creating a sustainable future and a green economy and be a leader on the global stage. Who knows what influence the many activists will have once they get there? Maybe they can change the game.

Another person who is going to Rio with the intention of making a difference is Polly Higgins, the London barrister and author of the book *Eradicating Ecocide*. Her team's goal is to stop the destruction of the Earth by getting the world's leaders to stand up at the Earth Summit and say "Let's make ecocide a crime" - the 5th crime against peace, after genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes and crimes of aggression. She defines ecocide as 'the extensive damage to, or loss of ecosystems, of a given territory'. An international law of Ecocide would make CEOs and heads of state legally responsible for protecting the Earth, facing jail terms for serious offenses - and she is not shy about including the Alberta tar sands as one such crime because the scale of the devastation.

To follow the Earth Summit's progress, go to these websites:

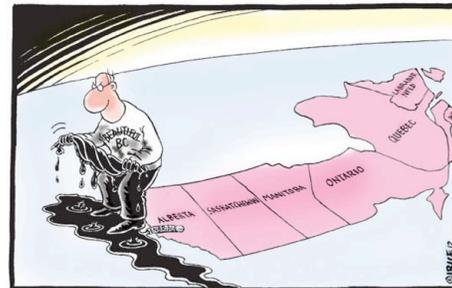
www.earthsummit2012.org

We Canada: www.earthsummit.ca

www.eradicatingecocide.com

PIPELINES AND OIL TANKERS

What can we do to stop the proposed Enbridge pipeline to Kitimat, expansion of the Kinder Morgan oil pipeline to Vancouver, and oil tanker traffic through the dangerous waters of the Great Bear Rainforest?



IF SOMETHING GOES WRONG...

It's a nagging question that's in many people's minds. The thought that the oil from Alberta's tar sands, having devastated the boreal forest, will be piped across 733 creeks, streams and rivers and then shipped through some BC's most dangerous and difficult waters, all so that the owners of the oil can get rich by selling it to China - well, it's getting a lot of people upset.

What can we do? I have assembled *Taking Action on the Tar Sands, the Pipelines and Oil Tankers* and put it on the Earthfuture website at www.earthfuture.com/econews/action with links to all the petitions, how to make your submission to the Joint Review Panel, how to ask your local council to join Prince Rupert, Terrace, Masset and other councils in passing a resolution against the oil tanker traffic, the link to the video *On The Line* about the route of the pipeline, and other suggestions. And don't miss 'What Is Harper Afraid Of?' by Franke James, at www.frankejames.com

Kim Slater from Whistler is running 1,170 km this summer from Jasper to Kitimat to connect with community leaders who want their voices heard against the oil sands, and in support of a sustainable national energy strategy. Her details are there too. The Harper government's plan is presumably to get the Review Panel Hearings done by the fall, and to have the Enbridge pipeline approved by cabinet before May 2013, when the provincial election will likely see the New Democrats elected to power in BC with a huge majority. This means that the push will be on this summer and fall to make a difference.

WHAT IS THE OIL SANDS EROI?

EROI stands for Energy Returned on Energy Invested – it's a measure of how much energy you have to use to get energy. In the early days of oil you needed the energy from one barrel of oil to extract a hundred barrels, for an EROI of 100:1.

Today, since all the easy oil has gone, one barrel only gets you fourteen barrels. In Alberta's oil sands, because so much energy is needed to extract the oil from the tar, one barrel gets you only three barrels. And by the time it has been shipped to China it will only give you 2.4 barrels. That's part of the craziness of the whole endeavor. The numbers come from a detailed analysis by Prince George engineers Chris Peters and Norm Jacob in their submission to the Northern Pipeline Joint Review Panel. You can find the details of their work in a recent BCSEA webinar slide presentation at www.bcsea.org/past-webinars.

So what's the EROI for wind and solar? The numbers are quite encouraging. For solar PV, the US Department of Energy calculated that over a 30-year lifetime solar PV will produce 26 to 29 years of net energy, translating into an approximate EROI range of 8 to 27. For wind, the European Wind Energy Association calculated that an offshore turbine covers its energy investment in 6.8 months, land-based in 6.6 months, giving an approximate EROI of 35 to 55 for a 20-30 year lifespan. Compared to 2.4 for oil piped to China.

THE BENEFIT CORPORATION

So now for something completely different. One of the fundamental reasons why so many things are going wrong in the world is because our civilization is using a legal framework for business that requires a company to maximize its returns to its shareholders. In the movie *The Corporation* this kind of behaviour was correctly labeled as psychopathic. A director's legal duty to maximize a company's returns requires decisions to be made which offload costs and damages onto workers, local communities, the environment and the atmosphere if they can get away with it.

Enter the B Lab, a non-profit team of committed people who saw the problem and wanted to fix it. To this end they created the Benefit Corporation, a new legal framework which uses the power of business to solve social and environmental problems. A certified B Corporation adopts a new legal structure which expands the definition of fiduciary trust and corporate accountability so that they require a company and its directors to

make decisions that are good for society, not just for their shareholders. It also requires it to publish an annual Impact Report and to appoint an independent benefit director. In a regular company, when an owner wants or needs to sell, he or she is obliged to take the highest price regardless of how evil the buyer might be, or if they want to fire all the workers and strip the assets. Being a certified B Corporation means that a company can only be sold to a company that accepts its mission unless there is a 2/3rds super-majority of shareholders.

So how is it going? Seven states in the US (including New York, California and New Jersey) have adopted laws creating benefit corporations, and 533 companies have become certified B Corporations across 60 different industries, including 48 in Canada. These include Salt Spring Coffee and Living Forest Communities, which is building an eco-hamlet at Elkington Forest on the Trans-Canada Trail south of Shawnigan Lake.



How big is this? It's potentially huge – the start of a revolution. It's a profound shift away from domination by the quarterly return, and the inherent conflict between doing business and making the world a better place. A B Corporation *must* pursue either a general public benefit or a specific benefit such as helping low income communities with products or services, or preserving the environment. When seen alongside the movement to create more cooperatives and for companies to embrace employee share-ownership, it's a game-changer.

How does a business become a B Corporation? There's a five-step process that begins with taking an impact assessment in which your business must score at least 80 points out of a possible 200. It's all laid out at www.bcorporation.net.

PENINSULA COOP

Are you a member of the Peninsula Co-op? If so, there's an election happening for the Board of Directors and three

people are running on a platform that wants to see the Co-op more engaged in the local economy and environmental sustainability, exploring alternative energy opportunities for its membership and focusing on supporting more local food production. The three candidates are Glenn Davidson, Roger Hart and Jack Thornburgh. If you did not receive your ballot papers, call 250-652-5752 www.peninsulaco-op.com

GARRY OAK RESTORATION

Can you help win the battle against invasive species at Fort Rodd Hill and Fisgard Lighthouse? Volunteers are restoring the endangered Garry Oak Ecosystem, home to more than 100 rare and endangered species, by removing invasive plants such as Scotch broom and spurge laurel. Volunteers are working mid-week and on Saturdays June 9th and 23rd. To help, call 250-812-8133.

NO BAN ON PESTICIDES

After 8,700 submissions, the proposed ban on the cosmetic use of pesticides in BC has come to naught. The Liberal majority on the Legislative Committee set up to examine the matter decided that there was not enough scientific evidence to justify an outright prohibition, and that there should be increased public education and Integrated Pest Management instead. The committee was chaired by Liberal MLA Bill Bennett, a self-confessed climate denier, so 'scientific evidence' can presumably be used for variable needs.

Following the announcement, NDP leader Adrian Dix introduced the Cosmetic Use of Pesticides Control Act, presumably seeking to force the government's hand. Premier Christy Clark has said she favours a ban, as do the Canadian Cancer Society and the Union of BC Municipalities.

ACTIONS OF THE MONTH

(1) BILL C-38

To send a Conservative MP your message, go to www.leadnow.ca and www.blackoutspeakout.ca. To contact Prime Minister Harper, call 613-992-4211 and email harper.s@parl.gc.ca. To email BC Premier Christy Clark, premier@gov.bc.ca

(2) THE ENBRIDGE PIPELINE

To sign all the various petitions, go to www.earthfuture.com/econews/action, where you will find many other suggested actions.