

LETTERS

LNG happening, poised for monumental year



GUEST VIEW

Minister Rich Coleman

British Columbia's liquefied natural gas industry made unprecedented progress this year.

The first final investment decision was made by Pacific NorthWest LNG, marking their commitment to move forward with construction and operation. That pledge had two conditions; with the first requiring government to finalize a project development agreement with them, which we did.

The other outstanding condition — environmental

approval by the Government of Canada — is scheduled for a decision in 2016. I am confident that progress will continue and Pacific NorthWest LNG will finalize their investment in the new-year, in addition to other LNG proponents coming forward with their decisions.

That could all happen while the expansion of FortisBC's Tilbury LNG facility continues in Delta which has already provided \$50 million in contract work to over 100 companies in neighbouring communities like Vancouver, Langley, Abbotsford, Coquitlam, and more.

These are positive developments for just three of the 20 facilities now proposed in our province. Other exciting news included LNG Canada finalizing the very first substituted environmental assessment in our province, keeping their proposal on track to be one of B.C.'s most promising export operations.

The progress made in B.C. in the last year is remarkable because these are challenging times in the industry, for

reasons beyond our control. Global prices have fallen since we launched our LNG Strategy and just as companies are considering making huge investments — some of the largest in Canadian history. But here's what's important to remember: B.C. is in this for the long-term. That's why we're taking actions on our end to ensure B.C. is globally competitive and an attractive place to invest.

If you were to listen to the critics — the 'scrooges' of economic development — they would tell you that progress has stalled and government should relinquish the BC Jobs Plan's ambitious goals for growth and market diversification.

Those pessimists, to be frank, are short-sighted; reluctant to admit LNG is making progress, creating jobs and securing long-term prosperity for all of us.

In fact, if just five facilities are built, we know the benefits are significant, including over 100,000 jobs. To date, industry has invested more than 20 billion dollars to advance development.

The prospects of a stronger future are most evident in First Nations communities where access to new skills training and environmental stewardship programs are materializing. We are inking agreements with financial benefits — both immediate and long-term — that are making a difference in communities that have been on the periphery of economic development for far too long.

Many First Nations are leading the charge as well. The Haisla Nation has been active in the Kitimat area for many years. Cedar LNG is another recent proposal that could move forward by partnerships owned directly by the Haisla Nation.

In 2016, we are poised to take even greater steps forward.

The B.C. government is negotiating project development agreements with proponents, working with First Nations to further strengthen environmental stewardship, and partnering with trades associations to increase skills training. Thousands of jobs are being created and our first

commitment is to have British Columbians ready for them.

We are confident Pacific NorthWest LNG will confirm its financial commitment — the largest private-sector investment in British Columbia — as a hallmark operation which will keep B.C.'s natural gas sector flourishing for decades.

Contract opportunities will increase, providing companies with long-term security and the ability to expand their businesses.

These are only a handful of developments that will be highlighted during our annual international conference in Vancouver, Oct. 12-14 - the fourth year we will host the energy industry's most influential people and discuss B.C.'s burgeoning role in the global marketplace.

We [were just] in the midst of the holiday season. This time of year we need to be thankful for what we have. Our province is fortunate to have reliable access to energy and the quality of life it provides us. Many other countries, including developing areas of Asia, are not as fortunate. Exporting our natural gas — the world's cleanest burning fossil fuel — can, and will, help Asian countries improve their standard of living and provide others with a dependable source of clean energy for decades to come.

Our government was ambitious about LNG from the day the BC Jobs Plan was released in 2011, when only a few export proposals were considered. In a few short years our prospects have increased exponentially.

We are building a new, long-term industry in British Columbia. The benefits are far-reaching and despite what 'Scrooge' claims, the opportunity has arrived, and it's only just beginning.

For more highlights about the LNG industry's progress, visit: https://news.gov.bc.ca/files/FS_BC_LNG_accomplishments_EOY_2015.pdf

Rich Coleman is B.C. Minister of Natural Gas Development

Agriculture policy needed for BC grown food



VIEW FROM THE LEGISLATURE

MLA Doug Donaldson

All indications are that the trend for increasing food prices will continue in the coming year.

University of Guelph researchers found the average Canadian household spent an additional \$325 on food in 2015 and will spend an additional \$345 in 2016.

Some of this has to do with the low Canadian dollar — 81 per cent of all fruit and vegetables are imported in Canada. But climate change is also having an impact with meat prices rising 5 per cent last year and expected

to increase another 4.5 per cent in 2016 with drought conditions causing feed and other inputs to skyrocket.

In B.C., we had the Select Standing Committee on Agriculture composed of Government and Official Opposition MLAs as one forum in the legislature to address topics associated with food production in the

province.

Unfortunately the standing committee was disbanded 14 years ago by the BC Liberals.

In response to public interest in having a bipartisan forum to discuss agriculture policy in the province, the Official Opposition initiated the re-establishment of the committee through our agriculture spokesperson Lana Popham.

Although the BC Liberals refused the offer to join the committee or officially reinstate it, we formed the committee anyway with five BC NDP members and one independent MLA appointed.

The committee toured the province in 2015 and delivered their first report on the last day of the fall session.

Based on the written and oral presentations they received, committee members focused their recommendations in two broad categories: existing policy in need of improvement and policy in need of new direction.

Among the recommendations are ones to reduce transportation costs for food produced in B.C., to increase food production capacity in the province, to support new farmers

and to strengthen applied research and education programming for agriculture and food systems.

The full report can be found on the Official Opposition website and if you would like a hardcopy you can contact the Stikine MLA offices in Smithers or Hazelton.

It is well worth the read as we enter 2016 knowing that BC food production will become even more important if we want reasonably priced, healthy, provincially-grown food available at our local stores.

Doug Donaldson is MLA for Stikine.

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TO:
THE EDITOR

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