

Canada's Oil Exec in Chief

In case anyone wondered, this is how the world ends: with the cutest, progressivest, boybandiest leader in the world going fully in the tank for the oil industry.

Justin Trudeau's government announced on Tuesday that it would nationalize the Kinder Morgan pipeline running from the tar sands of Alberta to the tidewater of British Columbia.

It will fork over at least \$4.5bn in Canadian taxpayers' money for the right to own a 60-year-old pipe that springs leaks regularly, and for the right to push through a second pipeline on the same route –

The country's finance minister, Bill Morneau, said **"It must be built. It will be built"**

A proposal that has provoked strong opposition from three main sources. First are many of Canada's First Nations groups, who don't want their land used for this purpose without their permission, and who fear the effects of oil spills on the oceans and forests they depend on. Second are the residents of Canada's west coast, who don't want hundreds of additional tankers plying the narrow inlets around Vancouver on the theory that eventually there's going to be an oil spill. And third are climate scientists, who point out that even if Trudeau's pipeline doesn't spill oil into the ocean, it will spill carbon into the atmosphere.

Lots of carbon: Trudeau told oil executives last year that "no country would find 173bn barrels of oil in the ground and just leave it there". That's apparently how much he plans to dig up and burn – and if he's successful, the one half of 1% of the planet that is Canadian will have awarded to itself almost one-third of the remaining carbon budget between us and the 1.5 degree rise in temperature the planet drew as a red line in Paris. There's no way of spinning the math that makes that okay – Canadians *already* emit more carbon per capita than Americans. Hell, than Saudi Arabians.

Is this a clever financial decision that will somehow make Canada rich? Certainly not in the long run. Cleaning up the tar sands complex in Alberta – the biggest, ugliest scar on the surface of the earth – is already estimated to cost more than the total revenues generated by all the oil that's come out of the ground. Meanwhile, when



something goes wrong, Canada is now on the hook: when BP tarred the Gulf of Mexico, the US was at least able to exact billions of dollars in fines to help with the cleanup. Canada will get to sue itself.

No, this is simply a scared prime minister playing politics. He's worried about the reaction in Alberta if the pipe is not built, and so he has mortgaged his credibility. His predecessor, Stephen Harper, probably would not have dared try – the outcry from environmentalists and First Nations would have been too overwhelming. But Trudeau is banking on the fact that his liberal charm will soothe things over. Since he's got Trump to point to – a true climate denier – maybe he'll get away with it.

But it seems like a bad bet to me. Faced with the same situation – a revolt over the Keystone XL pipeline – Barack Obama delayed for several years to avoid antagonizing either side. He ultimately decided he couldn't defend the climate cost of building it, and so became the first world leader to explicitly reject a big piece of infrastructure on global warming grounds. Trudeau has made the exact opposite call, and now we'll see if pipeline opponents cave.

I was in Vancouver two weeks ago to help activists raise money for lawyers, and I would guess that the civil disobedience will continue – so far, two members of parliament have been arrested, an escalation we've never seen even in the States. Coast Salish elders have built a "watch house" along the pipeline route and, as at Standing Rock, other native activists have been pouring in – I'm guessing that making this petro-colonialism officially state sponsored will only harden people's resolution. The showdown will be powerfully symbolic: kayaktivists, for instance, have paddled peacefully around the pipeline's terminal, at least until Kinder Morgan put up an ugly razor wire barrier in the middle of the harbor.

Now it's Trudeau who owns the razor wire, Trudeau who has to battle his own people. All in the name of pouring more carbon into the air, so he can make the oil companies back at the Alberta end of his pipe a little more money. We know now how history will remember Justin Trudeau: not as a dreamy progressive, but as one more pathetic employee of the richest, most reckless industry in the planet's history.

-Bill McKibben

PUTTING A FACE BACK ON THE LAND



Indigenous and environmental groups organized a flash rally in Vancouver in reaction to the announcement Canada's federal government is buying out the Trans Mountain pipeline. Hundreds of First Nations groups, environmentalists and other concerned residents gathered on the grounds of Science World to protest the federal government's plan.

Will George, a member of the Tsleil-Waututh Nation, has been acting as guardian of Burnaby Mountain's Watch House, which was built earlier this year as a protest structure. George called the decision hurtful and a letdown. **"This concerns a lot of people so we are absolutely going to ramp up our demonstrations and our movement,"** George said.

Longtime pipeline opponent and Burnaby MP Kennedy Stewart – who is running for mayor of Vancouver as an independent – invoked the late NDP leader Jack Layton in his speech, saying he would fight the pipeline till the very end. **"Today we actually took out Kinder Morgan. Kinder Morgan put their tail between their legs and they ran back to Texas,"** Stewart said. **"The only opponent we have left is Justin Trudeau. He's the only one that's pushing this pipeline through. You think we can take him out?"**

There are a number of lawsuits against the pipeline expansion project, something that gives some opponents like Rueben George, also from the Tsleil-Waututh Nation, hope. **"We're already suing Canada. You know, we've got court cases ... in the Federal Court of Appeal with allies and different nations and each one had about five arguments in total. They have to win them all. We only have to win one or**

two to stop this, and I believe in the Canadian constitution protecting our Indigenous rights," George said.

"Our lands and waters," George continued, **"have shaped our culture and will be central to our way of life for generations to come. We will continue to put the face of the Tsleil-Waututh Nation back on our traditional territory, build capacity within our community, and participate on all levels—social, ecological, cultural, economic—in decision making within our lands."**

Environmental groups say the Canadian government's pipeline buyout is reckless and raises questions about the country's commitment to battling climate change. **"We are furious. I was in shock this morning, I didn't think the government was actually this stupid to buy a pipeline that has 17 court cases against it,"** said Peter McCartney from the Wilderness Committee.

"This is now Canadian taxpayer money that is putting our coast here at risk of an oil spill. It's just...it boggles the mind that they could think this is a good move for Canada."

Opponents say they are going to ramp up efforts to stop the pipeline from being built.

From: warriorpublications.wordpress.com