

February 13, 2014

Why Should We Care About Energy East?

Ontario residents would be wise to find out how the Energy East Pipeline is going to affect us. If we want any changes made, now is the time to make our suggestions, before the pipeline is approved.

The Ontario Energy Board will be holding public consultations in March and April to assess Ontario's position, and will present their conclusions to the National Energy Board, who ultimately must give their approval for the pipeline to proceed.

TransCanada wants to convert its existing natural gas pipeline, which passes through our backyard in North Grenville and under the Rideau River, to carry bitumen and other forms of crude oil. It is not clear if this pipeline, built in the 1970's, can handle the material. Leaks are inevitable, cleanups costly, and the potential for contaminating water supplies a major concern.

On a national basis, it is not clear how much of this oil will be used in Canada and how much will be exported. Should Canadians be accepting economic, health and environmental risks for a project that will profit oil companies?

So, is this pipeline a good thing for Ontario? Is it better to transport oil by rail or pipeline? Could our local water supplies be affected? People are wondering if we are encouraging further tar sands development and greenhouse gas emissions by allowing this project to go ahead. Will we be facing natural gas shortages as a result? And are we making enough effort to develop alternative energy supplies?

To help answer some of these questions, the Rideau Environmental Action League (REAL) is hosting a public information session on Wednesday, March 12 at the Station Theatre, Smiths Falls. Andrea Harden, from the Council of Canadians, Ian Angus, of Sustainable North Grenville, and Ben Powless, of Ecology Ottawa, will present their thoughts, and a question period will follow. If you have particular questions you would like answered, you are invited to submit them to REAL at info@REALaction.ca in advance of evening.

Doors open at 6:30. Brief videos on pipelines, energy and the tar sands will be shown from 6:30 to 7:00 p.m., when our MC will introduce the speakers. Admission is free, but donations to cover costs are welcome. The evening is anticipated to wrap up about 8:30 p.m. More details on the evening will be available on REAL's website www.REALaction.ca.

REAL is a volunteer non-profit organization, based in Smiths Falls and serving Lanark, Leeds and Grenville, that encourages individuals and communities to take environmental **action**.

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