Individual Citizen’s Brief:

(from) Catherine Hembling
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Dear Members of the Senate Standing Committee considering Bill C69,

I appreciate very much that the Committee has undertaken to seek input from across the country. I am writing as a citizen, not as a technical expert, or as someone with financial “skin in the game”.

A). Summary of main points:

1. Expanded range of factors to be addressed

2. Political interference

B). Recommendations:

Expanded range:

1a. Upstream and downstream emissions, particularly of CO2, must be considered honestly and scientifically.

1b. The scope of IAA decisions needs to be flexible in the context of current and cumulative levels of CO2 in the air shed, for example, under the proposed assessment, I believe there is no account taken of forest fires and their impact on the air shed.

1c. Effects of hydrocarbons, (including benzene), hydrogen sulphide and particulate matter on human health all need to be considered in IAA assessments.

1d. Despite passing references, there is no legislated requirement to obtain free, prior and informed consent of First Nations, and no mention of UNDRIP.

2. Political interference

2a. Ministerial discretion should not be a defining factor when deciding on the inclusion (or not) of a project on a project list, or deciding (or not) on assessment.

2b. “Political interference” based on lobbying effort needs to be made obvious. Registration and public scrutiny are essential. This piece of legislation needs to make reference to that real life context.
My context:

I have lived in Vancouver most of my 77 years, and been active in many outdoor pursuits. I cannot help but notice changes in the natural environment: the decreased snowpack, the rapid melt, the new normal of torrential rain storms, the increased water temperatures in salmon bearing rivers and streams. Even my city garden is affected: Tall yellow, Leopardsbane daisies once decorated my spring garden at daffodil time. They cannot tolerate the heat of the past few summers, and after 10 productive years have died back to almost nothing, hiding in a niche on the north side of a tree.

I am dreading the coming summer months of smokey skies, coughs and irritated throat. I am considering creating an airtight room with air filter. The visit of a niece from Europe last year was utterly spoiled by lack of visible scenery, and warnings to avoid vigorous outdoor activity. We usually enjoy hikes, walks and camping trips.

I try not to live in cognitive dissonance. Bill c 69 provides some integration of values and action, but is sorely dissonant in the above areas. Please insist on modifications.

Yours sincerely,

Catherine Hembling