Bill C-69 | Briefing Note
April 27, 2019
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Good morning, afternoon, or evening sirs and madams,

I hope that this brief will find you all well. This is the first time in my twenty-eight years of life writing to a senate committee with respect to a bill, so please excuse any formatting discrepancies that exist within this letter. For ease of reference, each section is numbered and bolded, with the exception of this introductory section and the concluding section. Let us begin.

1. Why Do We Need Bill C-69?

✓ Assessment on projects in the energy sector that have an impact on the environment – this is inclusive of any and all oil and gas proposed projects that occur within our country regardless of economic stimulus that the project would bring.
✓ Project reviews that will be conducted independently, with transparency, and be steeped in scientific knowledge of the potential impact on carbon emissions and the environment. These reviews will also give individuals the opportunity to meaningfully add their voice to these reviews as well as Indigenous engagement on these projects.
✓ Bill C-69 would serve as a small slice of peace of mind to myself and many other Canadians that our government is taking the threat of climate change seriously, and moving to protect our environment while transitioning towards sustainable practices in energy projects while investing in green alternatives that will have a minimal impact on the environment than our country’s past endeavours in the energy sector has had.
✓ Consideration to be given to vulnerable and local populations when reviewing projects. Every project that impacts the environment that the site itself is situated in also effects the broader surrounding environment – rather it be via waterways, wildlife, human health, and so on.

2. Oversight Over Navigable Waters

✓ I would hope this particular heading be evident – in 2012, a very broad definition of navigable waters was substituted in to our laws for a broad one that acted to protect all of
our waterways. I am not in a position to voice my harsh criticism of this – if my recollection serves, 2009 marked the beginning of a recession, and in 2012 I am sure the repercussions of it were still being felt. Be that as it may, it is not acceptable to lose sight of the importance of environmental issues and sustainable development in favour of economic development.

✓ A public registry would allow for Canadians to see what is being impacted, and from there determine whether it is prudent to continue employing these energy projects or look for alternatives to them.

✓ This would require the minister to consider impacts on navigable waters, not only the economic stimulus that any given project would bring.

3. Energy Regulation

✓ Consideration to be given to the impact on climate change that any given project would have. We have to cut carbon emissions by at least 45% by 2030, and so far, our emissions are not declining but are rising. This is a right now, real, catastrophic issue that can no longer go without consideration in the planning processes of the energy sector.

✓ Input from the public, and Indigenous engagement on each and every proposed project.

This is our environment, our children’s future, our country. The sustainability of the future needs to be spoken for by each and every Canadian going forward.

These are, in brief, the reasons and changes that Bill C-69 enacts that are imperative to Canada and our future. This is not longer an issue that we have the luxury of sleeping on, so to speak. Ottawa and Montreal are currently flooding. Saskatchewan recently declared a state of emergency due to an out of control grass fire. Climate change is here. As much as our government wishes to approach economic stimulus with a no holds barred heavy handedness, we must now invest all of our efforts as a united front to reduce our emissions and preserve our environment through sustainable efforts for future generations. If we choose to ignore this, there will be no future generation. That is an established fact.

On a personal note, so that you may have more understanding about who it is that has written this brief in favour of Bill C-69, I am from a coal-mining family. My grandfather and father both worked in a mine in a small town in British Columbia.

I have lived in Alberta, Ontario, Nunavut, and now I have settled in Winnipeg, Manitoba, the very city some of you debated skipping over during your consultation with Canadians. You had questioned whether it would be prudent to stop in a city and a province that is a part of our country because of finances. Effectively, you tried to say that our voices did not matter, that a Winnipeger and a Manitoban is interchangeable with a Saskatchewanian. We are here, and we do matter. Each
and every Canadian that you represent on this issue matters. What is no longer financially prudent is the utter apathy that you have chosen to employ towards environmental and climate issues in favour of the economic stimulation that the energy sector brings.

Bill C-69 marks the first small step that must be taken to ensure our future, and I cannot stress the urgency of it being accepted and passed. It is up to us to save the climate and our environment for the future now – it will not be possible to take action even a year or two from the present.