Submission to the Standing Senate Committee on Energy, the Environment and Natural Resources on Bill C-69

April 8, 2019

Honorable Senators:

Thank you for this opportunity to provide comments on Bill C-69. This is the second time I have had the opportunity to present to the government about Environmental Impact Assessment as a member of the public. I spoke to the Expert Panel when they traveled here almost 2 years ago to gather information about the public’s needs and concerns when drafting this bill in the first place.

I have been following the news and am concerned by how quickly some have forgotten the vast amount of participation by the Canadian public that has already gone into this legislation. The Multi-Interest Advisory Committee holds members of diverse interests and includes the voices of the current disgruntled population, that of oil and gas and the nuclear industry. These voices were at the table during the construction of both Bill C-68 and C-69, therefore it is misleading in the media to say that Canadians, and the oil and gas and nuclear industry in particular, have not had their say. The voices of the oil and gas and nuclear energy communities have been integral to the process.

The voices that do seem to be lost are those of the broad Canadian public, the majority of whom voted for a Federal Liberal government who ran on a platform to assess the broken state of Environmental Assessment in Canada and to create new legislation to reconcile what was lost in the 2012 legislation. I am asking you, this Senate committee, to remember my voice and the broad diversity of voices that took the time to participate in consultation on what is important to Canadians about Environmental Assessment.

Federal Impact Assessment is incredibly important in that resource development projects matter to all Canadians – both their benefits and their costs. It matters what kind of development Canada, as a nation, constructs and it matters who and what is taken into consideration. Bill C-69, particularly the Impact Assessment Act, is a compromise to satisfy the needs of industry but also to provide the needed space to the public to become involved in things that matter to Canadians. This is especially important in light of the Liberal Party’s commitment to renew a Nation-to-Nation relationship with the First Nations peoples of Canada.

I support Bill C-69 as a needed step towards more responsible and respectful resources development in Canada.

Sincerely,

Mya J. Wheeler, M.N.R.M.
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