



Friday 19th August, 2022

Fern Stockman
Executive Project Director
BC Environmental Assessment Office
PO Box 9426 Stn Prov Govt
Victoria BC V8W 9V1

Sent via email to: Fern.Stockman@gov.bc.ca

RE: Amendment Application No. 2: Temporary Workforce Accommodation for the proposed Eagle Mountain - Woodfibre Gas Pipeline Project by FortisBC

Dear Fern Stockman,

We are writing on behalf of more than 20,750 people that have signed a [petition](#) in opposition to the proposed Eagle Mountain – Woodfibre Gas Pipeline Project.

We object to the BC EAO's decision to exclude public comment for the proposed amendment by FortisBC to build a temporary workcamp for this project.

As per your email dated May 12, 2022, you stated that:

“The EAO has decided not to conduct a public comment period on the current proposed amendment for the Eagle Mountain pipeline project. This decision was made based on the following:

- It is anticipated that there will be very limited impacts to the public because the amendment is focused on the size of the workforce accommodation. This amendment is not proposing any changes to the overall workforce numbers that were assessed in the original EA and effects of the workforce were assessed in the original assessment;*
- The use of this workforce camp was a result of mitigation measures to lessen the impact on the local accommodations and services;*
- The amendment does not include a specific location (consistent with the EA certificate);*
- During the previous amendment a large portion of comments were form letters and contained comments similar to those received during the public consultation sessions for the original project EA process and out of scope of the amendment review;*
- Fortis has been conducting public engagement and will provide results of that engagement to the EAO for consideration in the amendment process.”*

As per your email dated May 16, 2022, you further clarified that:

“For amendments where there would possibly be public interest, a public engagement and comment period, including the potential formation of a community advisory committee, is conducted by the EAO, or rationale must be given to the Deputy Chief Assessment Officer (decision maker) if public engagement should not be

required. Details are available in the EAO's amendment policy here: [Environmental Assessment Certificate and Exemption Order Amendment Policy.](#)"

While we understand that there is no requirement for public consultation on amendments as per Section 32 of the Environmental Assessment Act, in our view, it is not possible for the BC EAO to adequately assess the potential impacts of this workcamp without meaningful public engagement. We believe the above rationale from the BC EAO is arbitrary and unfounded for the following reasons:

1. BC EAO is choosing not to allow public engagement on the workcamp amendment.

While the BC EAO is not required to conduct a public comment period for the amendment process, the [amendment policy](#) notes that public comment periods may be ordered by the EAO on the assessment procedure, on supplementary information provided by the proponent, and on a draft Amendment Assessment Report. The BC EAO is choosing not to engage the public on this latest amendment.

A recent review of the amendment process for Environmental Assessments (EA) conducted for mines in B.C. noted that *"As 98% of amendments were approved, we express concern that the amendment process is being used by proponents (whether intentionally or unintentionally) as a "loophole" to evade the rigour and scrutiny of the regular EA process."*¹

The lack of public oversight and engagement for this latest workcamp amendment is unacceptable.

2. The effects of a workcamp located within the community of Squamish has never been assessed, and the general public has not been granted the opportunity for public comment.

In the 2015 Application for an Environmental Assessment Certificate, FortisBC stated that *"no worker construction camps are anticipated"*² and that *"...the proposed Project is expecting to house workers in local accommodation in the District of Squamish and the RMOW."*³

In response to concerns about the effects on the cost and availability of accommodation by local governments, stakeholders, and Aboriginal groups, in September 2015 FortisBC applied for *"a potential construction camp west of the Squamish River to reduce marine traffic and worker accommodation requirements in Squamish"* as per Addendum 2.⁴

¹ Collison BR et al (2022) Undermining environmental assessment laws: post-assessment amendments for mines in British Columbia, Canada, and potential impacts on water resources

² FortisBC Energy Inc (2015) Application for an Environmental Assessment Certificate for the proposed Eagle Mountain – Woodfibre Gas Pipeline Project: [Executive Summary](#), page lxvi.

³ FortisBC Energy Inc (2015) Application for an Environmental Assessment Certificate for the proposed Eagle Mountain – Woodfibre Gas Pipeline Project: [Section 12.0](#): Community and Regional Infrastructure and Services Effects Assessment, page 12-63.

⁴ FortisBC Energy Inc (2015) Application for an Environmental Assessment Certificate for the proposed Eagle Mountain – Woodfibre Gas Pipeline Project: [Addendum 2](#), September 2015, 81 pp.

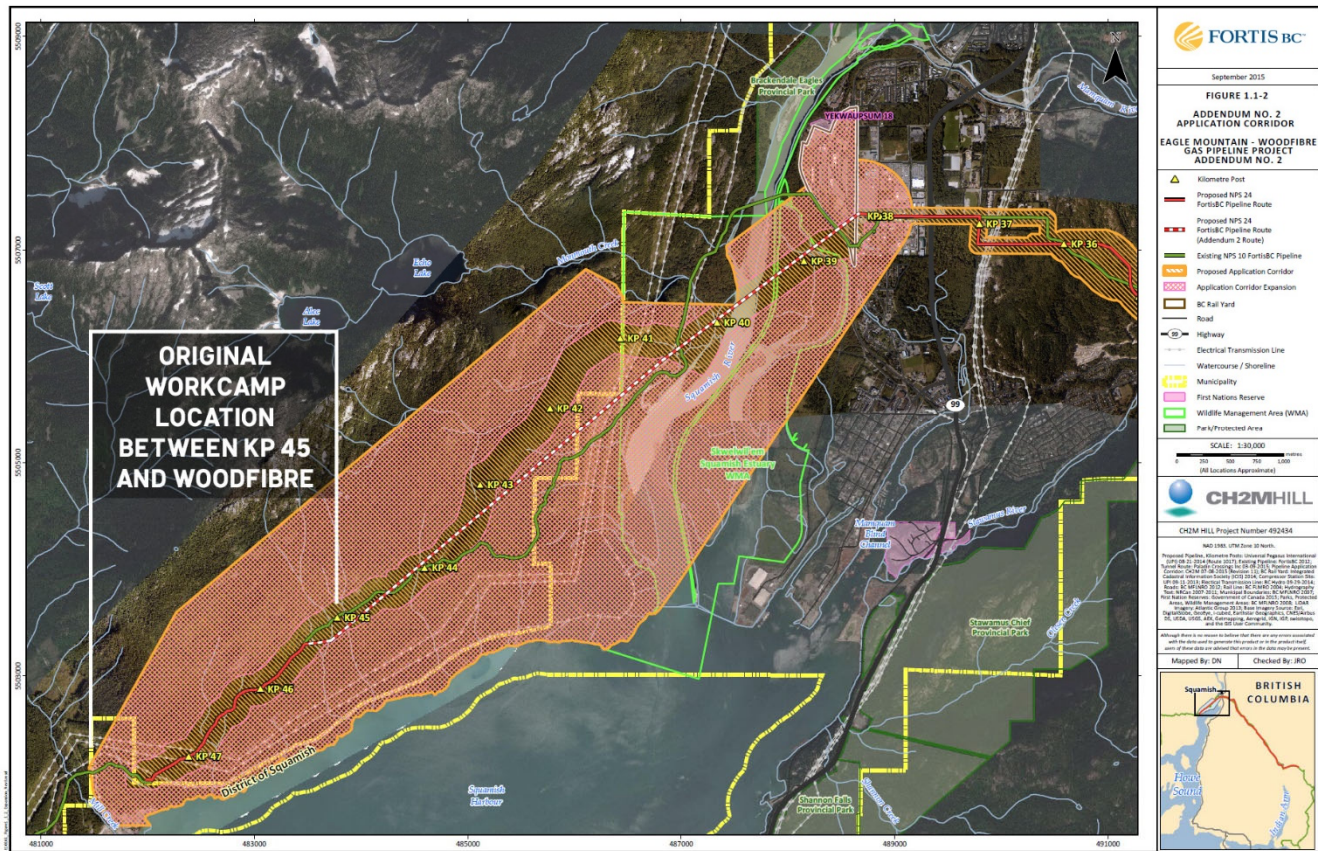


Figure 1: the workcamp originally proposed by FortisBC in Addendum 2 was located “between approximately KP 45 to the Woodfibre LNG Project site.”

Addendum 2 stated that this workcamp would be located “Between approximately KP 45 to the Woodfibre LNG Project site.” (See Figure 1).

Addendum 2 also stated that “FortisBC is considering use of a construction camp to support Project construction on the west side of Squamish River to the end point of the proposed pipeline. The construction camp is proposed to be located at or within 5 km of the Woodfibre LNG Project site and would be designed for approximately 150 to 250 workers. FortisBC is currently investigating either a land or sea based construction camp. If FortisBC determines to use a construction camp, the number of daily barge trips transporting construction personnel would be reduced.”

It is important to note that this proposed workcamp was located on the west side of the Squamish River, several kilometers away from the community of Squamish and accessible only by boat.

At the time, My Sea to Sky viewed the workcamp amendment as a response to our concerns about the impacts of accommodating temporary workers on housing availability and affordability in Squamish. Due to the proposed location far away from the community of Squamish, we did not provide input on the known environmental, economic, social, cultural, and health effects that are widely documented for workcamps, and we did not provide comment on the proposed workcamp in our response to Addendum 2.

While Addendum 2 described a very specific location for the workcamp on the west side of the Squamish River, when the BC EAO approved FortisBC's Application for an Environmental Assessment Certificate in 2016, the Certified Project Description allowed Temporary Construction Facilities including a construction camp of up to 2 ha to be located "*anywhere within or outside the Certified Pipeline Corridor.*"⁵

However, in the Assessment Report for the Eagle Mountain - Woodfibre Pipeline Project, the BC EAO notes that "FortisBC has also proposed a potential worker construction camp west of Squamish to mitigate accommodation pressure during construction."⁶

Therefore, it is our view that as per the Required Assessment Matters outlined in Section 25 of the Environmental Assessment Act,⁷ the environmental, economic, social, cultural and health effects (and adverse cumulative effects) of a workcamp located within the community of Squamish has never been assessed, and the general public has never been granted an opportunity to provide public comment on a workcamp in this location. This is unacceptable.

3. Adverse cumulative effects of two workcamps for up to 1,250 temporary workers located in or near Squamish have never been assessed.

In 2019, Woodfibre LNG submitted an amendment to its Environmental Assessment Certificate for temporary floating worker accommodation (aka "floatel") at the Woodfibre site for up to 600 temporary workers.⁸ Woodfibre LNG is currently negotiating with the District of Squamish for these temporary workers to be able to access the community of Squamish.

FortisBC has also projected that up to 650 temporary workers will be living at a second workcamp.

However, the adverse cumulative effects of two workcamps with up to 1,250 temporary workers, located in or near Squamish, have never been assessed.

In the Amendment application, FortisBC failed to include Woodfibre LNG's "floatel" in the list of Reasonably Foreseeable Developments outlined in Tables 6.1 and 6.2.

In Section 6.3, FortisBC also fails to consider any adverse cumulative effects for the developments included in Tables 6.1 and 6.2. This oversight must be rectified.

⁵ BC EAO (2016) Eagle Mountain – Woodfibre Gas Pipeline Project, [Schedule A](#), Certified Project Description for an Environmental Assessment Certificate. 15 pp.

⁶ BC EAO (2016) Eagle Mountain – Woodfibre Gas Pipeline Project: [Assessment Report](#). 21 pp.

⁷ BC Government (2022) [Environmental Assessment Act](#) [SBC 2018] Chapter 51. Current to August 10, 2022.

⁸ Hemmera (2019) Woodfibre LNG Worker Accommodation: [Application to Amend](#) Environmental Assessment Approvals. 136 pp.

4. The rationale that “*there will be very limited impacts to the public because the amendment is focused on the size of the workforce accommodation*” is false.

There is a significant difference between the effects of a temporary and transitory workforce that live in a workcamp compared to a workforce that lives in their own homes with their families, and feel accountable to the community that they live in.

This failure by the BC EAO to acknowledge these effects is evidence that the BC EAO lacks the expertise or understanding of the significant adverse effects of workcamps associated with resource extraction projects.

Studies^{9,10,11,12,13,14,15,16,17,18,19,20} during construction of similar industrial projects with large numbers of temporary construction workers have resulted in:

- increased number of workplace accidents.
- increased substance abuse and misuse.
- increased traffic accidents and collisions.

⁹ National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (2019) [Reclaiming Power and Place](#): The Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, Volume 1a. 728 pp.

¹⁰ National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (2019) [Reclaiming Power and Place](#): The Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, Volume 1b. 352 pp.

¹¹ Amnesty International (2016) [Out of Sight, Out of Mind](#): Gender, Indigenous Rights, and Energy Development in Northeast British Columbia, Canada. 12 pp.

¹² Maimann K (2018) [Link between rural work camps and violence against women is real, researchers say](#). The Star Edmonton, published 2018-12-04.

¹³ Northern Health (2018) [Health and Safety During the Opioid Overdose Emergency](#): Northern Health’s Recommendations for Industrial Camps. Office of Health and Resource Development. Version 1.5. August 2018.

¹⁴ Northern Health (2017) [Communicable Disease Control Plan Best Management Guide for Industrial Camps](#). Office of Health and Resource Development. Version 2.2. July 2017.

¹⁵ Secwepemcul’ecw Assembly (2019) [What are man camps?](#) Accessed 2019-04-20

¹⁶ Clarice Eckford and Jillian Wagg (2014) [The Peace Project: Gender Based Analysis of Violence against Women and Girls in Fort St. John](#). Prepared for the Fort St. John Women’s Resource Society.

¹⁷ Smith J (2016) [Fort St. John ‘a dangerous place for our women,’ indigenous activist says](#). The Star, published 2016-04-03

¹⁸ Rugh P (2013) [Inside Fracking’s ‘Man Camps’, Where Sex, Drugs, and Gonorrhea Run Rampant](#). Motherboard, published 2013-10-18.

¹⁹ Follett Hosgood A (2022) [BC Didn’t Track Spread of COVID-19 from Work Camps, Documents Show](#). The Tyee, published 2022-03-23.

²⁰ Simmons M (2020) [LNG Canada workers complained about unsafe conditions prior to COVID-19 outbreak](#). The Narwhal, published 2020-12-04.

- increased rate of violent crime, including sexual assault and sexualized violence, and increased domestic violence.
- increased violence against Indigenous women and children.
- increased rates of prostitution.
- increased demands on hospitals, counselling, police, and ambulance services, which results in reduced service capacity for residents.
- increased risk of COVID-19 outbreaks.
- waste disposal issues.

FortisBC has also failed to consider many of these impacts in its amendment application. We ask the BC EAO to enable a full public comment period to ensure adequate oversight and input.

5. FortisBC has now identified the proposed location of the workcamp

The BC EAO's justification for not conducting a public comment period included the rationale that *"The amendment does not include a specific location (consistent with the EA certificate)."*

This is no longer the case, as a candidate site description has been provided to the BC EAO. However, the supplementary materials provided by FortisBC fail to address the site-specific effects of a workcamp in this location as required by Section 25.

We ask the BC EAO to require FortisBC to update the Amendment application to properly evaluate the location of the workcamp as per Section 25 of the Environmental Assessment Act, followed by a comprehensive public comment period.

6. Lack of meaningful public engagement

The BC EAO's justification for not conducting a public comment period includes the rationale that *"During the previous amendment a large portion of comments were form letters and contained comments similar to those received during the public consultation sessions for the original project EA process and out of scope of the amendment review;*

Quite frankly, we find this statement offensive. This rationale indicates that the BC EAO's expectations of public engagement are unreasonable. According to this statement, to participate in the first amendment for the Eagle Mountain to Woodfibre Pipeline project, the general public must:

- 1) have a clear understanding of the environmental assessment process;
- 2) read and interpret the policies outlined in the Environmental Assessment Act;
- 3) attend at least one of several public information sessions;
- 4) review more than 291 pages of highly technical written materials, along with 526 pages of appendices;
- 5) engage directly with the BC EAO and FortisBC to clarify any questions;
- 6) ensure that any and all comments provided are within the scope of the amendment review;
- 7) complete all of the above within a few short weeks, in the lead-up to the holiday season, as the public comment period for the previous amendment ended on December 23rd, 2020.



Since 2014, My Sea to Sky has played the important role of facilitating public engagement in the environmental assessment process because we recognize that the process is overly complicated, technical, and difficult for the public to engage in.

There are often inadequate timelines for review, and overlapping public comment periods. To engage in a meaningful way often requires our organization to drop all our other work, redirect staff and volunteer time, and work on nights and weekends to enable us to participate. This is an unfair and unreasonable burden.

This is an issue that we have flagged repeatedly over the last nine years, as *“a process that limits the time for government and stakeholders to scrutinize applications is unfair given that proponents are typically far less restricted in how long they have to assemble their applications.”*²¹

For example, in 2015 the public comment period to respond to Addenda 2 and 3 (which were related to the proposed workcamp on the west side of the river) was only 3-weeks long.

While we appreciate the longer timeframe that we have been granted to provide input on this second amendment, we still have not been able to access support from experts or lawyers to support our review due to inadequate notice, short timeframes, and lack of funding.

We are not lawyers, policy wonks, or experts in the EA process. We are a group of everyday citizens that founded an organization due to our concerns about the proposed Woodfibre LNG and FortisBC projects.

Despite these very real challenges, our staff and volunteers endeavor to compile example comments that the general public can use as a template to inform their own submissions to the BC EAO. We find it extremely problematic for the BC EAO to dismiss these as “form letters” or to categorize them as “out of scope of the amendment review.”

My Sea to Sky has repeatedly expressed concern that public engagement is meaningless, as the concerns that we have expressed throughout the environmental assessment have been ignored, dismissed, and disregarded.

This latest amendment is proof, as we have consistently highlighted concerns about the impacts of FortisBC and Woodfibre LNG’s temporary workforces on accommodation in Squamish since 2014. However, it is only now, nearly nine years later that FortisBC has finally responded to these concerns.

This is a clear failure in process and demonstrates the inability (or unwillingness) of the BC EAO to take public comments into consideration when evaluating the potential effects of a project, and translating them into strong conditions and regulations.

The BC EAO consistently demonstrates that public engagement is nothing more than a checkbox on a form, and now appears to be avoiding public engagement altogether.

²¹ Joseph C et al (2015) Good practices for environmental assessment. Impact Assessment & Project Appraisal, Volume 33 Issue 4, Pages 238-254. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14615517.2015.1063811>

From our perspective, the BC EAO is effectively acting as a captured regulator, and failing in its duty to protect the public and the environment. The BC EAO is also failing to meet the public's expectation of a strong, transparent process.

The Environmental Assessment Revitalization was intended to enhance public confidence *“by ensuring impacted First Nations, local communities and governments and the broader public can meaningfully participate in all stages of environmental assessment through a process that is robust, transparent, timely and predictable.”*

By refusing to enable public comment for this latest amendment for a workcamp, the BC EAO is failing to deliver on this promise.

The BC EAO is also failing in its purpose as defined by Section 2 of the Environmental Assessment Act by *“facilitating meaningful public participation throughout assessments,”* and *“using the best available science, Indigenous knowledge and local knowledge in decision making under the Act.”*

7. Approval with mitigation should not be a foregone conclusion

While a workcamp may mitigate some impacts of a large, temporary workforce on accommodation in Squamish, we disagree with the BC EAO's rationale that *“The use of this workforce camp was a result of mitigation measures to lessen the impact on the local accommodations and services”* as an excuse to refuse public oversight of this amendment.

As we have noted above, the effects of a workcamp located in Squamish have never properly been assessed, and the general public has not been given the opportunity to provide input. We also note that workcamps can have significant adverse effects on services such as hospitals, counselling, police, and ambulance services, which results in reduced service capacity for residents. These effects must be properly evaluated and reviewed by the public.

8. Public engagement conducted by the proponent is not inclusive and creates a clear conflict of interest in reporting

My Sea to Sky has consistently been excluded from public engagement conducted by FortisBC for several years. For example:

- Exclusion from participation at Community Tables
- Failure to notify My Sea to Sky of Public Information Sessions
- Refusing to respond to questions posed during public information sessions and failing to report these questions to the BC EAO.

Similar to the concerns we have raised with the professional reliance approach, allowing FortisBC to determine who should be included (or excluded) as stakeholders, and selectively report on the feedback provided in these sessions is a clear conflict of interest.



MY SEA TO SKY

In summary, My Sea to Sky has long since lost trust in the integrity of an environmental assessment process that lacks transparency and appears to be designed to approve projects regardless of their impacts on our environment and our communities.

The BC EAO's arbitrary and unfounded decision to exclude public comment on this latest amendment by FortisBC to build a workcamp in Squamish furthers our disillusionment with this broken process.

We call on the BC EAO to require FortisBC to resubmit its amendment application to evaluate the impacts of a workcamp in this proposed location in Squamish, followed by a fulsome public comment period to enable the public to provide input.

Please feel free to contact us for further information or clarification.

Sincerely,

Tracey Saxby BA/BSc (Hons I)

Executive Director

My Sea to Sky

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Appendix

Statements by FortisBC in their Application for an Environmental Assessment Certificate:

- 1) “Removal of “temporary construction camps.” This change was made as a clarification, this project is not proposing “temporary construction camps.”

SOURCE: FortisBC- Revised AIR, Nov. 10, 2014. Table 0.1 – Summary of key document changes since February 13, 2014 version.

- 2) “The proposed Project will require access roads and temporary workspace; however, no worker construction camps are anticipated...”

SOURCE: FortisBC Energy Inc (2015) Application for an Environmental Assessment Certificate for the proposed Eagle Mountain – Woodfibre Gas Pipeline Project: Executive Summary, page lxvi.

- 3) “During construction, it is expected that the temporary workers will need to be housed in rental housing and temporary (commercial) accommodation. This in turn could lead to a reduced availability of short-term accommodation.”

SOURCE: FortisBC Energy Inc (2015) Application for an Environmental Assessment Certificate for the proposed Eagle Mountain – Woodfibre Gas Pipeline Project: Section 12.0: Community and Regional Infrastructure and Services Effects Assessment, page 12-38.

- 4) “There will be short-term increased demand for accommodation including hotels, motels, rental suites and campgrounds in the RMOW and the District of Squamish where temporary construction workers will stay during the construction phase. Increased demand for accommodation could lead to upward pressure on the price of rental and temporary accommodation.”

“The District of Squamish currently has a low rental vacancy rate. The District of Squamish generally offers lower housing prices than its RMOW and City of Vancouver neighbours, which has attracted young families to this district in the past few years (Carrington, Stoyko pers. comm.). However, the Sea to Sky Community Services Society noted that prior to the 2010 Olympics, housing rates increased greatly and displaced lower-income families.”

SOURCE: FortisBC Energy Inc (2015) Application for an Environmental Assessment Certificate for the proposed Eagle Mountain – Woodfibre Gas Pipeline Project: Section 12.0: Community and Regional Infrastructure and Services Effects Assessment, page 12-39.

- 5) “...the proposed Project is expecting to house workers in local accommodation in the District of Squamish and the RMOW.”

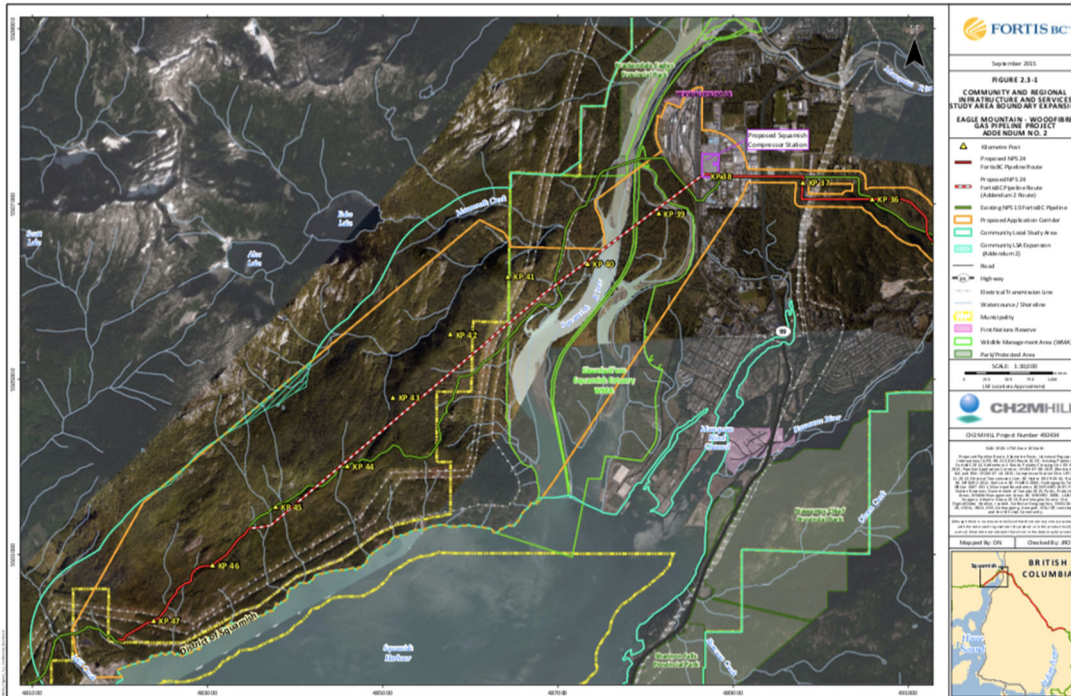
SOURCE: FortisBC Energy Inc (2015) Application for an Environmental Assessment Certificate for the proposed Eagle Mountain – Woodfibre Gas Pipeline Project: Section 12.0: Community and Regional Infrastructure and Services Effects Assessment, page 12-63.

- 6) “The workcamp to support Project construction on the west side of the Squamish River would not change existing economic conditions or adversely affect the Economy VC. Camp accommodation

would be provided by a contractor, and could generate positive indirect effects such as increased opportunities for procurement (i.e., camp services or supplies).”

SOURCE: FortisBC Energy Inc (2015) Addendum to the Application for an Environmental Assessment Certificate for the proposed Eagle Mountain – Woodfibre Gas Pipeline Project: Addendum 2, page 34.

- 7) “There is no change in existing conditions for the Land and Resources Use VC. The camp would be located inside the Land and Resources LSA assessed in Section 13.0 of the Application (Figure 2.3-1).”



SOURCE: FortisBC Energy Inc (2015) Addendum to the Application for an Environmental Assessment Certificate for the proposed Eagle Mountain – Woodfibre Gas Pipeline Project: Addendum 2, page 39-40.

- 8) “2.3.1.2 Community Utilities and Services Effects Assessment”

“If FortisBC chooses to proceed with the construction camp to accommodate up to 250 workers, there may be less workers seeking short-term accommodation in the District of Squamish and other communities in the Community and Regional Infrastructure and Services Study Area during the construction phase. However, as noted in Section 12.5.2.2 of the Application (Volume 1, Part B), the availability of rental accommodation in Squamish is very low and temporary accommodation is also limited. Workers employed in construction of the pipeline on the east side of the Squamish River and the compressor station will likely seek accommodation in the Squamish area. Therefore, the characterization of the potential effects for ‘increased demand for short-term accommodation’ and ‘upward pressure on housing costs in select communities’ described in Table 12.5-2 of the Application do not change, and the significance conclusions remain the same.”

“The construction camp would not be expected to adversely affect other key indicators for the Community Utilities and Services VC. As noted in section 1.1.2, the use of potable water and wastewater would follow all applicable regulations, and would be transported to and from the site matching the material barge schedule if facilities cannot be used at the site. On-site medics would be used and no adverse effect would be expected for emergency and health care services.”

SOURCE: FortisBC Energy Inc (2015) Addendum to the Application for an Environmental Assessment Certificate for the proposed Eagle Mountain – Woodfibre Gas Pipeline Project: Addendum 2, page 37.

Statements by BC EAO in their approval of FortisBC’s environmental assessment certificate

1. “EAO assessed the potential social and economic effects of the Eagle Mountain Project in sections 6 and 7 of the technical report, respectively. EAO is satisfied that the potential residual effects of the Eagle Mountain Project on the labour market and sustainable economy would be negligible and that there would not be significant adverse effects to the community, community utilities and services, or the economy.”

SOURCE: Environmental Assessment Office (2016) Eagle Mountain – Woodfibre Gas Pipeline Project: Assessment Report, page 17.

2. “A potential temporary worker camp west of the Squamish River to reduce marine traffic and worker accommodation requirements in Squamish.”

SOURCE: Environmental Assessment Office (2016) Eagle Mountain – Woodfibre Gas Pipeline Project: Assessment Report, page 2.

3. “FortisBC has also proposed a potential worker construction camp west of Squamish to mitigate accommodation pressure during construction.”

SOURCE: Environmental Assessment Office (2016) Eagle Mountain – Woodfibre Gas Pipeline Project: Assessment Report, page 17.