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VIA EMAIL: premier@gov.bc.ca

The Honourable Christy Clark
Premier of British Columbia
Box 9041
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Victoria, BC
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December 12, 2013

Dear Premier Clark,

Re: Protecting School Children from Oil and Gas Facilities

On behalf of the Peace Environment and Safety Trustees Society (PESTS), we submit the attached report and set of recommendations for your urgent consideration.

The oil and gas industry in northeast British Columbia is poised to launch an era of unprecedented expansion. If LNG exports proceed as planned, more than 6,000 new gas wells could be needed in the Northeast. Many of these wells will contain potentially lethal volumes of sour gas and other harmful pollutants, and many of them are likely to be installed in close proximity to elementary schools. It is important to note that young people are particularly vulnerable to such pollutants.

A number of schools in the northeast are already perilously close to oil and gas facilities. And if large-scale LNG development proceeds, these schools may well become surrounded by new facilities. For example, see map #1 in the attached report, which shows a multitude of well sites that surround a number of schools in the Northeast.

This situation raises substantial public health and safety issues – particularly in light of the seriously flawed Emergency Response Plans that previous incidents have brought to light. See the report for more details of those problems with Emergency Response Plans.

Plans for a new “world-class” LNG industry will be sorely lacking if they fail to include a “world-class” safety strategy for children surrounded by natural gas wells and pipelines. As the attached report documents, BC’s current safety rules are far from “world class.”

Therefore, we ask that your government give urgent priority to implementing the report’s recommendations for reform of:

- Minimum setback distances between schools and gas wells, pipelines and other facilities;
- The content and implementation of Emergency Response Plans for schools near gas wells and pipelines;

- Requirements for gas leak detection systems , and for air quality monitoring; and
- Regulations to reduce flaring and other releases of natural gas.

If we can be of assistance, we would be pleased to contribute to the necessary safety reforms.



Calvin Sandborn, Legal Director
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Tim Thielmann, Lawyer

"Jacqui McMorran"

Jacqui McMorran, Law Student

cc: The Honourable Peter Fassbender, Minister of Education (Minister.Educ@gov.bc.ca)
The Honourable Terry Lake, Minister of Health (HLTH.health@gov.bc.ca)
The Honourable Rich Coleman, Minister of Natural Gas Development (MNGH.minister@gov.bc.ca)
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