Captured

BRITISH COLUMBIA'S OIL AND GAS COMMISSION AND THE CASE FOR REFORM

By Ben Parfitt

AUGUST 2019

CCPA
CANADIAN CENTRE
for POLICY ALTERNATIVES
BC Office

CORPORATE
MAPPING PROJECT

CAPTURED

British Columbia's Oil and Gas Commission and the case for reform

By Ben Parfitt

August 2019

This paper is part of the Corporate Mapping Project (CMP), a research and public engagement initiative investigating the power of the fossil fuel industry. The CMP is jointly led by the University of Victoria, the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives' BC and Saskatchewan Offices and the Parkland Institute. This research was supported by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC).

Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada | Conseil de recherches en sciences humaines du Canada | Canada

University of Victoria Social Sciences | PARKLAND INSTITUTE | CCPA CANADIAN CENTRE for POLICY ALTERNATIVES SASKATCHEWAN OFFICE | CORPORATE MAPPING PROJECT

PUBLISHING TEAM

Shannon Daub, Jean Kavanagh, Emira Mears, Terra Poirier
Layout: Susan Purtell
Copyedit: Lucy Kenward
Cover photo: Garth Lenz

ISBN 978-1-77125-456-4

CCPA
CANADIAN CENTRE
for POLICY ALTERNATIVES
BC Office

520 – 700 West Pender Street Vancouver, BC V6C 1G8
604.801.5121 | ccpabc@policyalternatives.ca

www.policyalternatives.ca

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

BEN PARFITT is the resource policy analyst with the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives – BC Office. He has received numerous awards for his investigative journalism, is a co-author and author of two books on forestry, and is a long-established researcher and policy analyst specializing in natural resource management and environmental issues. Reports and analysis for the CCPA–BC include *Fracking, First Nations and Water: Respecting Indigenous rights and better protecting our shared resources* (June 2017); *A Dam Big Problem: Regulatory breakdown as fracking companies in BC's northeast build dozens of unauthorized dams* (May 2017); *From disenfranchised to revitalized: Ten proposals to set our forests and BC's rural communities on a new course* (March 2016); *Counting Every Drop: The case for water use reporting in BC* (June 2013); and *Fracking Up Our Water, Hydro Power and Climate: BC's reckless pursuit of shale gas* (November 2011).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author thanks the CCPA's BC Office Director Shannon Daub and three anonymous reviewers for comments and suggestions that substantially improved the report. The author also thanks former CCPA–BC Director Seth Klein for his many helpful comments on an early draft of the report, senior economist Marc Lee for his insights and ongoing collaboration and CCPA–BC Associate Director Emira Mears. Lastly, the author is indebted to Jason Tockman for his work in preparing the appendix to this report, and to the University of Victoria's Environmental Law Centre, specifically supervising lawyer Deborah Curran and law student Kelly Firth for their helpful research.

This report forms part of the broader body of research produced under the auspices of the Corporate Mapping Project, a research and public engagement initiative jointly led by the University of Victoria, the CCPA's BC and Saskatchewan offices, and the Alberta-based Parkland Institute. Funded by the Social Science and Humanities Research Council of Canada, it brings together researchers, civil society organizations and Indigenous participants to study the oil, gas and coal industries in BC, Alberta and Saskatchewan.

Contents

Summary

This report reveals that from an early stage the OGC bore the hallmarks of a "captured" agency. The very industry that it was to regulate had a significant hand in its creation.

MUCH HAS CHANGED IN THE 21 YEARS since the British Columbia government created one agency—the BC Oil and Gas Commission (OGC)—to regulate fossil industry activities in the province.

The changes include:

- An industry-wide shift to drilling for natural gas and other hydrocarbons in "unconventional" zones and the increased reliance on hydraulic fracturing, or fracking, that such a shift entails.
- The prospect of accelerated drilling and fracking operations to support a liquefied natural gas sector in the province.
- Growing tensions between First Nations and the provincial government over fossil fuel industry developments on treaty lands and an acknowledgement by the government that a new relationship with First Nations must be struck.

None of these changes were foreseen when the commission was created. For that reason, a closer look at how the agency came into being and how it has performed over the years is warranted. This report shows that the driving force behind establishing the commission was the fossil fuel industry itself.

In the late 1990s, oil and natural gas producers demanded that one regulator be placed in charge of reviewing and approving all industry development applications to speed up and streamline the existing process, which required consultation with multiple provincial ministries and departments before a permit could be issued. If a new "one-stop" agency failed to materialize, industry warned the government, continued investment in the province's fossil fuel sector would be in jeopardy.

The government of the day agreed to the industry's key demands and was fully supported in its decision by opposition members in the legislature. The OGC was created and the new agency was given the mandate to streamline review and approval processes and to get more development permits into the hands of industry clients as quickly as possible. At the same time, the new agency was tasked with upholding all environmental laws and ensuring that, at a minimum, all relevant acts and regulations were followed and that important natural resources such as water, forests, fish and wildlife, and clean air were safeguarded for this and future generations.

Research for this report reveals that from an early stage the OGC bore the hallmarks of a "captured" agency. The very industry that it was to regulate had a significant hand in its creation. Subsequent changes to the regulations governing the fossil fuel industry and the commission only deepened

the impression that the OGC was captured and that the interests of industry took precedence over the broader public interest. We look at the evolution of the OGC, the phenomenon of captured regulators and a few troubling examples where rules that the agency was to uphold were systematically broken with few—if any—serious consequences for the companies that violated the rules or for the OGC that failed to uphold them. These examples indicate regulatory breakdown on a troubling scale and the need for major reforms to better safeguard the public interest.

The report concludes with a list of recommended policy changes to address some of the more glaring shortcomings of the current regulatory approach, with specific attention to ensuring the changes reflect the government's avowed commitment to implementing the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. The six recommendations are to:

1. Create a new, arm's-length agency to oversee compliance and enforcement in the fossil fuel sector.
2. Restructure the OGC's board, remove its powers to change regulations and restore regulation-making powers to an accountable energy ministry.
3. Create new co-management or co-governance agreements with First Nations.
4. Reinstate a single water authority to regulate all water users.
5. Compel the OGC to release all information that is in the public interest in a timely manner.
6. Compel the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy to report annually on how the OGC's permitting decisions and regulatory oversight of the fossil fuel industry fit within the province's climate action plans and greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets.

Changes to the regulations governing the fossil fuel industry and the commission only deepened the impression that the OGC was captured and that the interests of industry took precedence over the broader public interest.

The report emphasizes that these changes are not, and should not, be seen as an endorsement for ongoing or accelerated fossil fuel developments in the province and elsewhere. Steadily increasing global greenhouse gas emissions have resulted in grave changes to precipitation and weather patterns around the world, including in British Columbia, and those changes are almost certain to get worse. Until such time as fossil fuel extraction ends, however, the industry needs to be regulated in a manner that better protects the public interest. The recommended changes would help to make this happen.

Introduction

The provincial government encouraged the commission to sharply reduce the time lag between when companies submitted applications and when they received approvals.

BRITISH COLUMBIA'S OIL AND GAS COMMISSION (OGC) is a Crown corporation responsible for regulating the fossil fuel industry. The industry operates almost exclusively in the northeastern quarter of the province, a sparsely populated region roughly the size of England and Scotland combined.

The commission was formed in 1998 and tasked by the provincial government with speeding up the review and approval process of industry development applications, most notably applications to drill new natural gas wells. To achieve this, the government granted the OGC regulatory powers that had previously been spread across numerous provincial ministries responsible for forestry, mining and the environment.

Prior to the OGC's creation, Canada's preeminent fossil fuel industry association, the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers (CAPP), lobbied for a stand-alone agency that would be the sole, dedicated energy industry regulator. The industry warned that failure to make such a change would result in investment flight.[1]

The provincial government responded by creating the new agency. It gave the OGC broad powers to review and approve industry development applications, and it encouraged the infant commission to sharply reduce the time lag between when companies submitted applications and when they received approvals.

The OGC was tasked with doing all of this while also protecting the broad public interest. This meant that in tandem with reducing industry wait times, the OGC was to ensure that, at a minimum, all relevant acts and regulations were followed and that important natural resources such as water, forests, fish and wildlife, and clean air were safeguarded for this and future generations.

Since the OGC's creation, there has been a profound shift in how fossil fuel resources are exploited in BC and elsewhere. The most important shift is linked to declines in available "conventional" natural gas and oil resources.

1 Murray Rankin et al., "Regulatory Reform in the British Columbia Petroleum Industry: The Oil and Gas Commission," *Alberta Law Review* 38, no. 1 (2000): 143. The paper notes that the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers funded a study by Golder Associates Inc. and used the study to bolster its calls for a new energy industry regulator in British Columbia. "Among other things, Golder Associates found overlapping legislation, an overly complex approval process, lack of departmental cooperation, and a shortage of human resources, particularly at peak times. One comment made by an unattributed representative was that Alberta had a one-window approach with understandable rules and time frames. The same was true in British Columbia in theory but not in practice. According to Golder Associates, if regulatory reform did not occur quickly, several companies in the Peace River region planned to withdraw their investment in British Columbia entirely."

NATURAL GAS FLARING NEAR TOWER GAS PLANT. PHOTO BY GARTH LENZ.

For decades, companies hunting for oil and gas simply drilled straight down through the earth's surface into relatively porous reservoirs where lots of hydrocarbons were known to be found. With relatively little effort, those hydrocarbons were coaxed to the surface from deep below.

Today, due to the depletion of easier-to-access resources, more hydrocarbons come from "unconventional" zones such as shale rock. To get oil and gas from such zones is not easy. It requires drilling down into them, drilling horizontally through them and then pumping large volumes of water, sand and chemicals down the boreholes with enough force to fracture the rock so that the trapped hydrocarbons can be released. High-pressure hydraulic fracturing, or fracking, is now the norm in BC and it bears very little resemblance to how natural gas was accessed when the commission was created or during its first decade of existence.

Coinciding with the sharp increase in fracking, more natural gas and gas liquids are being extracted and processed in BC and elsewhere than ever before. The outcome is a temporary glut of gas and growing pressure to export large volumes of it overseas—an outcome that would require the construction of major liquefied natural gas (LNG) terminals on BC's coast.

LNG production in coastal communities such as Kitimat now appears more certain and will result in dramatic increases in natural gas drilling and fracking in northeastern BC.

Escalated use of fracking and the prospect of a sizeable LNG industry in BC are playing out against the backdrop of mounting evidence that the planet's climate has changed due to steadily increasing greenhouse gas emissions associated with fossil fuel use. They are also playing out against a backdrop of rising awareness that governments around the world have all too frequently failed to obtain the free, prior and informed consent of Indigenous peoples before issuing development permits to mining, forestry and oil and gas companies. Both the governments of British Columbia and Canada have vowed to rectify that situation by implementing the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP).

Escalated use of fracking and the prospect of a sizeable LNG industry in BC are playing out against the backdrop of mounting evidence that the planet's climate has changed due to steadily increasing greenhouse gas emissions associated with fossil fuel use.

Given such developments, a review of BC's Oil and Gas Commission is both timely and necessary. This paper concludes that the commission must be fundamentally reformed both because of changed circumstances and because of evidence that the OGC has failed time and again to uphold the public interest.

As part of the process for producing this paper, supervising lawyer Deborah Curran and law student Kelly Firth at the University of Victoria's Environmental Law Centre reviewed the legislative record and examined key mileposts in the commission's evolution.[2] The review provides a valuable account of exchanges in the BC legislature as the commission went from concept to reality; government's rationale for creating the agency; and details on some of the key changes to the legislation and regulations governing the agency over time.

The commission must be fundamentally reformed both because of changed circumstances and because of evidence that the OGC has failed time and again to uphold the public interest.

Further assistance was provided by Jason Tockman, a research associate with the BC Office of the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (CCPA–BC). Tockman looked at who has occupied senior positions at the commission, and his work shows that many key personnel had strong industry ties. Tockman's work, combined with recent examples of regulatory breakdown at the commission that are detailed in this report, bolsters the conclusion that the agency is a "captured" regulator. In other words, it serves the interests of its corporate clients ahead of the public interest that it is also charged with defending.

This report begins by looking at what regulatory capture is and then examines the commission and the characteristics it shares with captured regulators. This includes a discussion of some key instances in which the commission failed to get tough with its industry clients despite overwhelming evidence that regulations it was tasked with enforcing were repeatedly broken. The examples suggest that the commission is failing to protect the public interest and that fundamental reforms are long overdue.

The report concludes with a list of recommended policy changes to address some of the more glaring shortcomings of the current regulatory approach, with specific attention to changes that support the province's avowed commitment to implementing the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

2 Deborah Curran and Kelly Firth, *Tracing the Authority of the BC Oil and Gas Commission*, A Report to the Environmental Law Centre, University of Victoria, 2018.

Regulatory capture

REGULATORS ARE CONSIDERED TO BE CAPTURED when the rules they are to uphold are "consistently or repeatedly directed away from the public interest and towards the interests of the regulated industry, by the intent or action of the industry itself."[3]

With respect to BC's Oil and Gas Commission specifically, there are indications that the agency was effectively captured at the outset. A review of debates in the BC legislature in early summer 1998 shows that both the government and Official Opposition understood and accepted that the oil and gas industry wanted changes to the way the industry was regulated and that a key demand was for a new, stand-alone, dedicated energy industry regulator.

With respect to BC's Oil and Gas Commission specifically, there are indications that the agency was effectively captured at the outset.

The government and Opposition acknowledged that the oil and gas industry had communicated its displeasure with how long it took for development applications to be reviewed and approved, and both also acknowledged that a new stand-alone energy industry regulator that oversaw a streamlined regulatory process was a key industry demand that had to be met.[4] Creating the new commission, it was then believed, would translate into increased industry investments and developments in northeastern BC. According to then–energy minister Dan Miller, fulfilling the industry's request for a stand-alone regulator was "expected to increase oil and gas production in the province to as much as twice its current level, leading to an investment by the industry of about $25 billion over the next 10 years."[5]

3 Daniel Carpenter & David A. Moss, eds. *Preventing Regulatory Capture: Special Interest Influence and How to Limit It* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

4 British Columbia, Debates of the Legislative Assembly, 36th Parl, 3rd Sess, 25 June 1998. In one exchange, Opposition member and Liberal MLA Dan Jarvis expressly noted the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers' unhappiness with the length of time it was taking to obtain required approvals to develop natural gas resources, saying that it took "two to six months" to get drilling and other permits in place. "Now the government has decided that it is going to go along with the wishes of the oil and gas producers in northeast British Columbia and Alberta. It's called CAPP, the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers. They feel that this [the proposed Oil and Gas Commission Act] is a good deal. They've worked—from what the Minister has told us in the estimates—pretty closely together in the last little while." Jarvis's comments came after then–energy minister and New Democratic Party MLA Dan Miller had moved second reading of the new Oil and Gas Commission Act, saying: "This bill is necessary to complete a commitment to the oil and gas industry as part of our oil and gas initiative. This is actually a critical component of our strategy to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the province's regulation of the industry. We are creating a single-window agency to oversee oil and gas industry operations from exploration to reclamation, while maintaining environmental standards."

5 Ibid.

Another key characteristic of captured regulators is that regulated industries effectively become "clients," and the clients' interests quickly come to "prevail over the broader public interest that the government is supposed to defend."[6] While the broader public interest can be tricky to define, writes Jason MacLean, an assistant professor at the University of Saskatchewan's College of Law, few would argue against the propositions that the public interest includes a world that is inhabitable for this and future generations and that unchecked greenhouse gas emissions pose a singular threat to a livable world.[7]

Steady increases in the production and combustion of fossil fuels can also have profound consequences for other vitally important public resources such as water. As industrial demand for water rises, the need to protect this valuable resource increases in lockstep. This should mean that the regulator is even more diligent in protecting the public interest.

Another sign that a public agency has been captured and is serving private interests is when people move into positions of power within the agency from the regulated industry. The reverse of this may also indicate capture.

Kevin Taft holds a PhD in business and has worked extensively in both the public and private sectors. His grasp of public policy is informed by his years as a Liberal member of the Alberta legislature (2001–2012), including four years as leader of the Official Opposition (2004–2008). In his book *Oil's Deep State: How the Petroleum Industry Undermines Democracy and Stops Action on Global Warming—in Alberta, and in Ottawa*, Taft examines how regulators become captured and what the consequences of that capture are for a state's citizenry.[8]

He notes how "public agencies established by governments to regulate industries in the public interest" are often captured by the industry they regulate even before such agencies are created. "If a private interest is able to control the way the institution's purpose or structure is established," Taft writes, then for all intents and purposes it has been captured. As we have seen, this clearly applies to the OGC, which was effectively lobbied for by the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers.

Another sign that a public agency has been captured and is serving private interests is when people move into positions of power within the agency from the regulated industry. The reverse of this may also indicate capture. In other words, when people from the agency subsequently assume positions of power and influence within the regulated industry. The movement from one to the other is known as "the revolving door" phenomenon. This, too, clearly applies to the OGC. Ken Paulson, the agency's current chief operating officer and executive vice president, was formerly a senior engineer for ATCO Gas, Alberta's largest distributor of natural gas. He sits on the board of the Society of Petroleum Engineers and is vice chair of the Western Regulators Forum (WRF). According to Bloomberg, the WRF is an interprovincial alliance of regulatory agencies "working to increase efficiency in the process of approving energy projects."[9]

Paulson's pedigree is far from unusual. Rob McManus, the commission's Commissioner and Chair of the Board, previously worked for CAPP, Shell Canada Limited and Gulf Canada Resources. After working at the commission from 1998 to 2001, McManus returned to work for industry first as vice president, Government, Environment and Regulatory Affairs for Calpine Canada, and then as president of Fulcrum Strategic Consulting, a company whose clients included CAPP and oil and gas industry giant ConocoPhillips. These connections between the regulator and the regulated are shown in greater detail in the appendix to this report.

---

6 David Boyd. *Unnatural Law: Rethinking Canadian Environmental Law and Policy*. UBC Press. 2003, page 253.

7 Jason MacLean, "Striking at the Root Problem of Canadian Environmental Law: Identifying and Escaping Regulatory Capture," *Journal of Environmental Law and Practice* 111, no. 29 (2016): page 14.

8 Kevin Taft, *Oil's Deep State: How the Petroleum Industry Undermines Democracy and Stops Action on Global Warming—in Alberta, and in Ottawa* (Toronto: James Lorimer & Company, 2017).

9 Robert Tuttle, "Western Canadian Energy Regulators Unite Amid Pipeline Delays," *Bloomberg*, December 2, 2014. Accessed June 11, 2019. https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2014-12-02/western-canadian-energy-regulators-unite-amid-pipe-delays.

Another sign that a public agency is captured is changes in pricing policies, Taft says. Governments typically collect royalties from fossil fuel companies based on how much oil and natural gas is being produced and the price that the energy companies receive for these products. In Alberta, which Taft characterizes as "oil's deep state," the purpose of the royalty program was reviewed in 2009–2010 and completely redefined. In 2007, Taft notes, the driving force behind the program was to ensure that Albertans—the ultimate owners of the province's natural gas and oil resources—received "the highest price" for those resources as they were developed by the fossil fuel industry, while the industry itself got its "fair share." But by 2011, following a full-court press by the oil and gas industry, natural gas and oil pricing policies shifted markedly to "a combined royalty and tax rate that is in the top quartile of investment opportunities compared to other jurisdictions... In short," Taft writes, "Alberta's royalty system had gone from serving the public to serving investors."[10]

While Taft does not explore the pricing framework in Canada's westernmost province, there is much to suggest that BC is on a similar trajectory. In the past 10 years in BC, companies extracting and producing natural gas and gas liquids have been able to reduce the royalties they pay to the provincial government by $5 billion under one so-called "credit" program alone. The BC government, however, refuses to divulge company-specific information on the amount of royalties paid by individual fossil fuel companies or the amount that individual companies receive in credits each year. It has even enacted legislation that it claims prevents the release of such information.[11]

In the past 10 years in BC, companies extracting and producing natural gas and gas liquids have been able to reduce the royalties they pay to the provincial government by $5 billion under one so-called "credit" program alone.

"In most of the world, minerals [or hydrocarbons] in the ground are owned by the state until they are mined or extracted, so the state determines the conditions and the price of sale of the raw material," Taft writes. "In effect, the state is now a player as well as the referee, with all the attendant complications. The state has an incentive to develop the resource, and at the same time becomes a target for capture by interests who want the state to set the price below full value. Business has a compelling reason to meddle in the state, and the officials running the state are often tempted to welcome such meddling."[12]

The consequences of a captured energy industry regulator are most grave for Alberta because of the sheer volume of oil and natural gas produced in that province. But they are also grave for BC, a province that has little by way of oil resources but whose natural gas resources are being extracted at an accelerating rate and show no sign of slowing.

10 Taft, *Oil's Deep State*.

11 Ben Parfitt, "British Columbians shortchanged billions from fossil fuel industry revenues," The Vancouver Sun. May 27, 2018. Accessed July 19, 2019. https://vancouversun.com/opinion/op-ed/ben-parfitt-british-columbians-shortchanged-billions-from-fossil-fuel-industry-revenues.

12 Taft, *Oil's Deep State*.

The OGC and the steady capture of a "one-stop" shop

The OGC is financed outside the provincial budgeting process and is therefore freed from much of the scrutiny associated with ministerial and departmental budgets.

PRIOR TO THE OGC'S ARRIVAL ON THE SCENE IN 1998, companies had to apply to numerous provincial ministries and branches to obtain required authorizations before drilling for natural gas could begin. The list included but was not limited to the Ministry of Forests, which issued permits to log forests for industry roads, pipeline corridors, well pads and more; the Ministry of Lands, which issued various permits to occupy Crown or public lands; the Heritage Conservation Branch, which issued archaeological permits; and the Ministry of Environment, which issued water permits and permits governing industrial activities in sensitive fish and wildlife habitats. All such authorization powers were then largely transferred to the new commission, which became and still claims to be a "single-window" shop for regulatory approvals.[13]

The ability of the OGC to issue water authorizations is particularly noteworthy given the tremendous increase in fracking operations mentioned earlier. Initially, the OGC was given powers to issue only short-term water use permits to industry applicants. That power was later extended, allowing the commission to issue longer-term water licences. With that change, the fossil fuel industry essentially has its own dedicated water regulator—a feat that no other industry in the province has achieved.

Under its inaugural legislation and regulations, the OGC became a Crown corporation that was fully financed by fees collected from oil and gas companies. This effectively placed the agency outside the provincial budgeting process and therefore freed it from much of the scrutiny associated with ministerial and departmental budgets, especially following the release of the annual provincial budget and during Question Period and Estimates Debates. To make the infant agency's governance structure as "slim and efficient" as possible, the government elected to have only a two-person board oversee the OGC, the bare minimum required.

While policy development remained the provincial government's purview, the one-stop agency took on "the difficult task of making this entity work for the purposes that we want it to work: to

13 "About Us," BC Oil and Gas Commission website. Accessed May 7, 2019. https://www.bcogc.ca/about-us.

improve our ability to issue permits for oil and gas activity in northeastern British Columbia and to take into account the interests of other stakeholders beyond the oil and gas industry," said Dan Miller, then the province's energy minister.[14]

From the outset, the OGC was more than just a new agency tasked with the speedy review and approval of oil and gas industry development applications. The Oil and Gas Commission Act stated that the main purposes of the new commission were:

- To regulate oil and gas industry activities in a manner that fosters a healthy environment, a sound economy and social well-being.
- To conserve (meaning not waste) oil and gas resources in British Columbia.
- To ensure that "shared" or "pooled" gas resources are developed "equitably."
- To encourage First Nations' participation in "processes affecting them."

All of this and more were to be done in a manner that provided for:

> ...effective and efficient processes for the review of applications related to oil and gas activities or pipelines, and to ensure that applications that are approved are in the public interest having regard to environmental, economic and social effects.[15]

The OGC's first annual report was largely silent on the subject of environmental monitoring and enforcement issues.

By the time of the OGC's first annual report, it was clear that industry had got much of what it wanted. Under Commissioner Rob MacManus, who had left his job as a senior executive with CAPP to join the fledgling agency, review and approval of industry applications skyrocketed, climbing by 63 per cent in the first year.[16] The agency promised to be even more "aggressive" the subsequent year, by ensuring that 95 per cent of "normal applications [are] processed in 12 working days or less."[17]

The inaugural report was largely silent on the subject of environmental monitoring and enforcement issues. And four years later, further changes were made to the OGC, again to encourage more rapid fossil fuel extraction.

An important backdrop to the changes introduced in 2002 was a Ministry of Energy and Mines Annual Service Plan Report that flagged the government's intent to "double oil and gas development in the province" in 10 years and to generate $20 billion in new industry developments by 2008.[18] The same document flagged the ministry's intention to encourage the industry to expand production into coal-bed methane seams, a then-emerging "unconventional" gas resource that was known to be particularly environmentally contentious as it required both the dewatering of coal seams as well as fracking.[19] The destruction unleashed by such operations in Alberta and elsewhere would later become the subject of an award-winning book, *Slick Water*, by author and investigative journalist Andrew Nikiforuk.[20]

---

14 British Columbia, Debates of the Legislative Assembly, 36th Parl, 3rd Sess, 25 June 1988.

15 Oil and Gas Commission Act, SBC 1998, c 39, s. 3.fd. https://www.leg.bc.ca/Pages/BCLASS-Legacy.aspx#%2Fcontent%2Flegacy%2Fweb%2F36th3rd%2F1st_read%2Fgov32-1.htm.

16 Oil and Gas Commission, *1999/2000 Annual Report* (Fort St. John: Oil and Gas Commission, 2000), 2. https://www.bcogc.ca/node/5666/download.

17 Ibid., 3.

18 Ministry of Energy and Mines, *2002/2003 Annual Service Plan Report* (Victoria: Ministry of Energy and Mines, 2003), 23. https://www.bcbudget.gov.bc.ca/Annual_Reports/2002_2003/em/em.pdf.

19 Mary Griffiths and Chris Severson-Baker, *Unconventional Gas: The Environmental Challenges of Coalbed Methane Development in Alberta* (Drayton Valley, AB: Pembina Institute, 2003). https://www.pembina.org/reports/CBM_Final_April2006D.pdf.

20 Andrew Nikiforuk, *Slick Water: Fracking and One Insider's Stand Against the World's Most Powerful Industry* (Vancouver: Greystone Books, 2015).

SUNRISE GAS PLANT NEAR DAWSON CREEK, BC. PHOTO BY GARTH LENZ.

Elevating the most senior political appointee in the Ministry of Energy and Mines to the OGC board meant the government was free to pursue its goal of increasing energy industry developments in the province.

Three major changes were made with passage of the new legislation known as Bill 36, the Energy and Mines Statutes Amendment Act.

The first and most notable change was to appoint the Deputy Minister of Energy and Mines to be the third director of OGC and chair of its board. Elevating the most senior political appointee in the ministry to the OGC board meant the government was free not only to pursue its goal of increasing energy industry developments in the province but also to ensure perceived regulatory hurdles to such developments were removed and the review and approval process was streamlined even more. Linked to this change, the newest board member was given the power to cast the deciding vote in the event of a tie. And third, the Oil and Gas Commission Act was amended to allow the OGC to authorize "approval in principle" for a range of oil and gas activities over broad areas of land rather than issuing approvals activity by activity. According to Richard Neufeld, the province's energy minister at the time, this change was made to "reduce regulatory burdens" for company applicants and to "streamline" the OGC's "application and review process."[21]

The most recent legislative changes to the regulation of fossil fuel industry operations in BC occurred in 2008 with passage of the new Oil and Gas Activities Act (OGAA), though the changes largely took effect in 2010. The new legislation anticipated that a major shift in the global energy industry was underway as more conventional sources of oil and gas were depleted and the industry shifted to more "unconventional" sources such as shale zones. By using copious amounts of water in high-pressure fracking operations, companies in states like Texas had perfected the art of extracting large volumes of shale gas. By 2010, nearly one-quarter of all the natural gas produced in the United States came from such zones, an astonishing development considering that at the start of the decade shale zones contributed less than 2 per cent of all the natural gas produced in the US.[22]

21 British Columbia, Debates of the Legislative Assembly, 37th Parl, 3rd Sess, 2 May 2002.

22 Zhongmin Wang and Alan Krupnick, "A Retrospective Review of Shale Gas Development in the United States: What Led to the Boom?" (Washington: Resources for the Future, 2013). https://media.rff.org/documents/RFF-DP-13-12.pdf.

Table 1: Marketable natural gas production in BC, 2008 to 2017		
Year	**Production (1000 m^3)**	**Percentage change**
2007/2008	27,084,663	–
2008/2009	28,012,918	**+3.4%**
2009/2010	27,663,155	**-1.2%**
2010/2011	31,084,263	**+12.3%**
2011/2012	36,622,683	**+17.8%**
2012/2013	35,889,868	**-2%**
2013/2014	39,297,460	**+9.5%**
2014/2015	42,678,561	**+8.6%**
2015/2016	44,753,680	**+4.8%**
2016/2017	45,951,636	**+2.6%**
OVERALL INCREASE	**18,866,973**	**+70%**

Source: Figures provided by Cathy Mou, Senior Economist, Upstream Oil and Gas Division, Ministry of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources.

With the Oil and Gas Activities Act, the provincial government intended to "promote" energy companies in BC doing much the same thing as their counterparts in Texas.[23] Unlike the passage of the Oil and Gas Commission Act where opposition to the proposed bill was largely non-existent, the new act generated strong negative reaction from some members of the Official Opposition—but only on second reading of the bill. "Bill 20 is, in effect, an effort by this government to streamline and turbocharge the oil and gas sector in the province," said Gregor Robertson, MLA for Vancouver-Fairview.

Under the Oil and Gas Activities Act, the OGC gained unprecedented new powers to make or amend regulations.

Robertson maintained that the proposed changes were designed with one goal in mind: to stimulate more gas production. The changes included generously subsidizing fossil fuel companies by reducing their gas royalty payments through a unique credit scheme. As deeper wells and later horizontal wells have been drilled, companies drilling such wells have obtained credits from the government, which they then use to lower their royalty payments when the wells they have drilled and fracked begin producing gas.

Robertson noted that the credits as they existed in 2008 amounted to $990 million—or nearly $1 billion—by which fossil fuel companies could reduce their royalty payments in the next three years. He foresaw that those credits would effectively "turbocharge" the industry. In 2008, the year the new legislation was introduced, fossil fuel companies operating in BC produced 28 billion

23 British Columbia, Debates of the Legislative Assembly, 38th Parl, 4th Sess, Vol 30, No 9 (15 April 2008) at 11388. During the debate on the proposed Oil and Gas Activities Act, Richard Neufeld, then the province's energy minister, said: "We will become more competitive by bringing into effect a regulatory framework that shows leadership environmentally and socially, responsible oil and gas development, promotes unconventional resources in underdeveloped areas and fosters new technology and growth."

cubic metres of marketable natural gas. Ten years later, the industry has increased its production to just under 46 billion cubic metres.

Under the OGAA, the OGC gained unprecedented new powers to make or amend regulations. Typically, regulators themselves do not have such powers; only through orders-in-council signed by the relevant cabinet minister can new regulations be made. However, the deputy minister of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources gained the ability not only to break a tie vote of the OGC board but also to enact regulations under the OGAA to benefit the industry being regulated while ensuring the government's overall priorities for an expanded oil and gas sector were met. The new legislation also gave OGC compliance and enforcement staff lots of leeway to determine what enforcement actions to take. As we'll see, it appears that leeway may help to explain why fossil fuel companies that break key regulations time and time again have faced few serious consequences.

The OGC and signs of regulatory breakdown

BEGINNING IN 2017 AND CONTINUING THROUGH SPRING 2018, the CCPA–BC published a number of reports showing how fossil fuel companies repeatedly violate regulations the OGC is supposed to enforce. The violations are far from trifling matters, yet the companies that break the rules face few if any sanctions. In some cases, the OGC has actively hidden the information from the public until it has essentially been compelled to release it.

The following three examples underscore not only how dramatically and consistently fossil fuel companies violate the rules but also how the OGC essentially allows those rules to be broken and fails to mete out harsh penalties after violations come to light.

During the several decades when BC's Water Act was in force, the OGC consistently failed to ensure certain approval steps were followed, thereby allowing dozens of "unlicenced" dams to be built, many of which were later found to have serious design flaws.

Example 1: Unlicenced dams

In May 2017, the CCPA–BC published the first in a series of investigative reports revealing how fossil fuel companies had built dozens of dams in the province, violating key regulations in the process.[24]

Dams are critical infrastructure. If they fail, the environmental and public health and safety consequences can be enormous. That's why companies are not allowed to divert water or impound water behind dams until key authorizations are obtained. A water licence stipulates where a company may divert water from and how much water it is entitled to divert or withdraw, and only after that licence is granted can a company submit its plans for storing the water. If the storage involves a dam, then dam-building plans must be submitted to provincial dam safety officials for approval before any construction occurs. Our research shows that during the several decades when BC's Water Act was in force, the OGC consistently failed to ensure those steps were followed, thereby allowing dozens of "unlicenced" dams to be built, many of which were later found to have serious design flaws.

24 Ben Parfitt, "A Dam Big Problem: Regulatory Breakdown as Fracking Companies in BC's Northeast Build Dozens of Unauthorized Dams," *PolicyNote*, Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, May 3, 2017. https://www.policynote.ca/dam-big-problem/.

ONE OF MANY UNLICENSED DAMS BUILT BY PROGRESS ENERGY, A SUBSIDIARY OF PETRONAS. PHOTO BY GARTH LENZ.

The OGC also failed to require that companies submit dam-building plans to safety officials at the Ministry of Forests, Lands, and Natural Resources for approval before any construction began. Many of these unauthorized dams were later revealed to pose a serious threat to public health and safety and to the environment.

Most, if not all, of the unauthorized dams were built to corral the massive amounts of fresh water used in fracking operations. Under the Water Act, the province did not regulate groundwater or below-ground water use. Consequently, some of the dams built by industry before February 2016[25] fell into a grey zone because they trapped groundwater only. However, many dams built during this period trapped fresh water from surface water sources, and it was the OGC's job to ensure the companies building those dams complied with the act's regulations. By allowing the dams to be built before water licences were obtained, the OGC either knowingly or unknowingly allowed companies to violate Water Act regulations again and again.

The OGC also failed to require that companies submit dam-building plans to safety officials at the Ministry of Forests, Lands, and Natural Resources[26]—the sole agency in the province responsible for dams—for approval before any construction began. Many of these unauthorized dams were later revealed to pose a serious threat to public health and safety and to the environment. At that point, the OGC issued orders to many companies to address the glaring construction deficiencies at some of their dams, including a complete lack of installed "spillways" to prevent the dams from overfilling with water and potentially spilling over, a dangerous condition that can trigger catastrophic dam failures.[27] The commission was subsequently granted the power to approve new dams and appointed its own safety officials.

This was a case of regulatory failure on a massive scale. In case after case, fossil fuel companies simply submitted vague permit applications to the OGC under the Land Act, seeking the agency's permission to use Crown lands to "store water." The OGC does not appear to have asked how the companies applying for such permits intended to store water or where the water they proposed to store was to come from. After the OGC issued the Land Act permits, there is no indication that

25 The Water Act was replaced by a new Water Sustainability Act in February 2016, which closed this loophole.

26 This was the name of the ministry at the time the existence of the unauthorized dams became public knowledge. It is now known as the Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development.

27 Ben Parfitt, "Numerous Unlicensed Dams Found Structurally Unsound; Remediation Issues Ordered," *PolicyNote*, Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, December 18, 2017. https://www.policynote.ca/numerous-unlicensed-dams-found-structurally-unsound-remediation-orders-issued/.

agency personnel attempted to stop the companies from building structures that were clearly dams and that were, in many cases, diverting water from surface water sources in violation of water laws and regulations.

According to our research, at least 92 unauthorized dams were built, at least 51 of them were on Crown lands and therefore the OGC's responsibility to regulate (the Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations[28] had responsibility for dams built on private lands) and half of those 51 qualified as dams under the old Water Act. We also confirmed that many of those unauthorized dams that the OGC allowed to be built on its watch were later found to have serious structural flaws that in the worse-case scenarios could have resulted in catastrophic failures.[29]

It is also now known that critical information on some of these dams with serious structural flaws was released publicly only days after the CCPA–BC submitted a Freedom of Information request asking for the relevant documents. As we'll see, that was not the only case in which information was released with suspicious timing.[30]

Despite clear evidence that the Water Act and the provincial Dam Safety Regulation were violated, and that in two of the most egregious cases BC's Environmental Assessment Act was violated as well, none of the companies building unlicenced dams were charged with wrongdoing by the regulator.

Despite clear evidence that the Water Act, the provincial Dam Safety Regulation and the Environmental Assessment Act were violated, none of the companies building unlicenced dams were charged with wrongdoing by the regulator.

Example 2: Leaking gas wells and contaminated water

When companies drill natural gas wells, cement is typically poured between the outer edge of the wellbore and the pipe that is placed in the hole. The cement is meant to form a protective barrier that prevents gas from escaping into the surrounding rock and potentially into underground or groundwater sources. It is common, however, for cement jobs to be imperfect and/or for these barriers to fail. When that happens, methane gas—an extremely potent greenhouse gas—can leak through cracks in the faulty cement to contaminate groundwater and enter the atmosphere, where it wreaks climatic havoc.

In 2013, OGC personnel conducted an investigation to see if any gas seepage was happening in northeastern BC. The audit included only a portion of the industry's total operating area and found evidence of groundwater contamination at a number of leaking gas wells.[31] The audit visually confirmed contamination at nearly 50 gas wells. Based on that work, the OGC team extrapolated that gas leaks could be occurring at up to 900 different wells. Significantly, the extrapolation applied only to the study area, not to the entire area in which the industry operates nor to the area where the industry currently conducts most of its drilling and fracking operations.

These disturbing findings were kept secret for four years. The public learned of them only after an investigative reporter was leaked a copy of the suppressed audit and raised questions about it with the OGC.[32] The day after those questions were sent by email, the OGC published a link to

28 The current name of the ministry is the Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development.

29 Ben Parfitt, "Unauthorized Fracking Dam Problem Growing," *The Tyee*, March 29, 2018. https://thetyee.ca/News/2018/03/29/Unauthorized-Fracking-Dam-Problem-Growing/.

30 Andrew Nikiforuk, "Unregulated Energy Industry Dams at Risk, Oil and Gas Commission Finds," *The Tyee*, October 16, 2017. https://thetyee.ca/News/2017/10/16/Unregulated-Dams-At-Risk/.

31 BC Oil and Gas Commission, "Gas Migration Preliminary Investigation Report," December 2013. https://www.bcogc.ca/node/14620/download.

32 Andrew Nikiforuk, "Despite What Politicians Say, Hundreds of BC Gas Wells Leak Methane," *The Tyee*. November 23, 2017. https://thetyee.ca/News/2017/11/23/Hundreds-of-BC-Gas-Wells-Leak-Meth/.

the document on its website for the first time. The link was buried in a news release that talked about the "proactive" work the agency was doing on groundwater studies in northeastern BC.[33] The OGC subsequently said it did not release the document earlier because it had deemed it for "internal" use only.

While the agency sat on the damaging evidence, two successive provincial energy ministers, whose deputy ministers held commanding positions on the OGC board, publicly stated that groundwater contamination was not occurring at gas wells in BC. Former energy minister Rich Coleman claimed that there had "never" been an instance of a drill stem leaking in the province, while the province's current energy minister, Michelle Mungall, said there was "zero" evidence of groundwater contamination at faulty wells in BC.

At the time the ministers made their claims, the suppressed report sat in the OGC's offices and a regulation was in place that required companies to report all known leaking wells and to eliminate problems at those well sites. It is now six years since the OGC audit was done. According to recent correspondence with the commission, there are 123 wells now known to be leaking methane gas.[34]

According to recent correspondence with the commission, there are 123 wells now known to be leaking methane gas.

One troubling fact not addressed in that audit is the strong evidence that the risk of wells leaking gas and contaminating public water sources increases as shale gas drilling and fracking increase.[35] This is significant because almost all new natural gas wells drilled and fracked in the province are in shale zones.

Example 3: Burying the truth on cumulative impacts and endangered species

The OGC's handling of damaging evidence that fossil fuel companies repeatedly violated rules designed to provide a modicum of protection to threatened boreal caribou populations has disturbing parallels with the agency's handling of leaking wells and groundwater contamination.

In 2014, the OGC commissioned a professional biologist and consultant to conduct a first-ever audit of fossil fuel companies operating in and around the community of Fort Nelson in the remote, natural gas-rich Horn River Basin in northeastern BC. The audit was paid for by both the agency and a special OGC/CAPP fund and the mandate was to determine whether or not companies had complied with modest rules designed to protect caribou habitat. The audit rules were jointly developed by the OGC and CAPP personnel to meet the terms of a new "recovery" plan that the BC government had developed after the federal government formally listed boreal caribou as a "threatened" species under Canada's Species at Risk Act. Part of the recovery plan was led by the provincial Ministry of Environment, therefore fossil fuel companies were required to follow new operating practices to try to protect the species.

It is important to highlight that the recovery plan itself accepted that fossil fuel industry operations would continue largely unchecked, and that as a result there would be a projected 60 per cent drop in boreal caribou numbers in northeastern BC even if the suite of modest new operating

33 BC Oil and Gas Commission, "Aerial Survey Latest Effort to Better Understand Methane Emissions at Wells," Information Bulletin, November 20, 2017. https://www.bcogc.ca/node/14621/download.

34 Email to the CCPA from the Oil and Gas Commission, April 5, 2019.

35 Anthony Ingraffea et al. "Assessment and Risk Analysis of Casing and Cement Impairment in Oil and Gas Wells in Pennsylvania, 2000–2012," Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences 111 (30): 10955–60. https://www.pnas.org/content/111/30/10955.

PHOTO BY SCOTT LOUGH / FLICKR.

practices were followed.[36] The rules included simple requirements that companies place visual barriers along linear developments such as roads, seismic lines and pipeline corridors to break up sightlines and make it more difficult for the caribou's natural predator, the grey wolf, to see them. The rules also included limits on the size of individual natural gas well pads and specific requirements for restoring developed sites to a condition suitable to become caribou habitat again.

The auditor visited numerous sites where the industry operated, accompanied by members of the Fort Nelson First Nation. The auditor concluded in case after case that the companies had violated the simple rules they were asked to follow. For four years, the OGC refused to release the audit, even going so far as to not respond to emails from the Fort Nelson First Nation's lands department asking for a copy of it. Eventually, a copy of the suppressed audit was sent anonymously to the CCPA–BC, which publicized the audit's contents, generating a flurry of media attention.[37]

In response to the media coverage, the OGC finally acknowledged the existence of the audit but tried to cast its approach to protect caribou in a positive light. In a letter published in *The Province* newspaper, Paul Jeakins, the OGC's commissioner and CEO, said:

> Achieving stable boreal caribou herds in B.C. is complex and requires the best available science and the collaboration of governments, agencies, industry, First Nations and landowners.

The BC government's "recovery" plan for boreal caribou accepted that fossil fuel industry operations would continue largely unchecked, and that as a result there would be a projected 60 per cent drop in boreal caribou numbers in northeastern BC.

36 Ben Parfitt, "Leaked Document Shows BC Oil and Gas Commission Undermining Efforts To Save Threatened Caribou," *The Narwhal*. May 28, 2018. https://thenarwhal.ca/leaked-document-shows-b-c-oil-and-gas-commission-undermining-efforts-to-save-threatened-caribou/.

37 Ben Parfitt, "Threatened Caribou Further Endangered: Suppressed Audit Shows Oil and Gas Commission Undermining Provincial Efforts To Save Species," *PolicyNote*, Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, May 28, 2018. https://www.policynote.ca/condemning-caribou/.

> As the Crown corporation responsible for applying B.C. laws and regulations related to oil and gas activities, the B.C. Oil and Gas Commission plays an important role in helping safeguard boreal caribou.
>
> The commission provides oversight at every stage of oil and gas activity. For permits issued within caribou-habitat areas the commission includes conditions that help reduce impacts and inspectors take action to achieve compliance.[38]

Noticeably absent from Mr. Jeakins' response was any acknowledgement that rules had been broken or any indication of where, specifically, the OGC had "taken action" against companies that had broken the rules.

38 Paul Jeakins, "Oil and Gas Regulator Helps Safeguard Boreal Caribou," Letter to the Editor, *The Province*, May 25, 2018. https://theprovince.com/opinion/letters/letters-oil-and-gas-regulator-helps-safeguard-boreal-caribou.

The carrot versus the stick

IN PREPARING THIS REPORT, A REVIEW OF ENFORCEMENT ACTIONS AND OUTCOMES as reported by the OGC on its website was examined. The review indicates the commission has used the carrot more often than the stick when companies break the rules. Furthermore, when fines are imposed they are often dramatically below the maximum penalties the OGC could seek.

Of 99 enforcement actions the OGC posted on its website for public viewing, the vast majority (85) were "orders" to individual companies to take corrective actions at various operating sites.[39] Such orders do carry costs because companies must spend money and resources to fix identified problems (for example, installing a spillway at a shoddily built dam). But orders are not a formal finding of fault or responsibility and do not carry the stigma that hefty fines do.

In only 12 instances did the OGC take harsher action, formally declaring that a company had contravened a specific regulation and providing reasons why the company would or would not be formally sanctioned and ordered to pay an administrative penalty. In those 12 cases—which included companies found to have forged archeological records, allowed contaminants to spill onto adjacent properties and into fish-bearing streams, failed to remove toxic chemicals from fracking sites, unnecessarily flared gas and improperly disposed of toxic wastewater—the total fines levied were $92,750, or 1.8 per cent of the $5.05 million maximum that could have been assessed. A small number of tickets for more minor offences were also issued.

These findings, along with the three examples discussed earlier, suggest the OGC acts as an industry promoter more often than as a regulator or a protector of the public interest.

Our findings suggest that the OGC acts as an industry promoter more often than as a regulator or a protector of the public interest.

39 "Compliance and Enforcement," BC Oil and Gas Commission website. Accessed January 8, 2019. https://www.bcogc.ca/industry-zone/compliance-enforcement.

Table 2: Oil and Gas Commission compliance and enforcement statistics, March 2017 – May 2019		
Enforcement action	**Number of actions**	**Percentage of total actions**
Orders/warnings	99	86%
Administrative penalties	14	12%
Tickets	2	2%
Total	**115**	**100%**

Source: Compiled from the Oil and Gas Commission website: https://www.bcogc.ca/industry-zone/compliance-enforcement. Accessed January 8, 2019.

The OGC and a checkered track record with First Nations

CURRENTLY, THE OGC REFERS PERMIT APPLICATIONS FROM FOSSIL FUEL companies to the First Nations in the region to be developed and typically asks for a response within a matter of days. The pressures this places on often understaffed and underfinanced First Nations is obvious and was noted in the OGC's very first annual report in 1999–2000. That report flagged "2500 consultations with Treaty 8 First Nations on various applications" in the previous year. The same report noted that the OGC board's goal for the following year was to see "95% of the normal applications processed in 12 working days or less."[40]

Since then, activity in the oil and gas industry has expanded dramatically and referrals—or "consultations"—with First Nations have increased accordingly. Evidence suggests, however, that this process leaves much to be desired. Frustration is mounting in First Nations communities about the cumulative impacts of industrial developments on their traditional lands, and many of them are taking these cases to court. For example, the Blueberry River First Nations, which are located north of Fort St. John, have launched a civil suit against the provincial government over cumulative impacts from unauthorized dams built on lands used for hunting, fishing and other cultural purposes.

The two biggest and most-problematic dams were built by Progress Energy, which violated not only water and dam regulations but BC's Environmental Assessment Act as well. Documents sent to the Nation by the OGC show that what the company referred to as a "pit" in one of its permit applications was later built as an earthen dam that was taller than a seven-storey building.[41] Because the word "dam" was not used in the application, Blueberry River First Nations members never had the information they needed to properly assess the true environmental and public health and safety risks posed by the structure.

Because the word "dam" was not used in the application, Blueberry River First Nations members never had the information they needed to properly assess the true environmental and public health and safety risks posed by the structure.

40 Oil and Gas Commission, *1999/2000 Annual Report*.

41 Ben Parfitt, "Regarding Progress Energy's Exemption Applications Regarding Its Lily and Town Dams," Letter to BC's Environmental Assessment Office, September 20, 2017. https://www.policyalternatives.ca/sites/default/files/uploads/publications/BC%20Office/2017/09/ccpa-bc_EnvironmentalAssessmentLetter_2017.pdf.

WARNING SIGN NEAR PROGRESS ENERGY'S LILY DAM. PHOTO BY BEN PARFITT.

Evidence of a lack of meaningful consultation is also contained in the pages of a Supreme Court of British Columbia decision in December 2017, which found that members of the Fort Nelson First Nation had not been adequately consulted about a proposed natural gas pipeline in their traditional territory. Members of the Nation tried unsuccessfully to engage with the commission on the cumulative impacts that the pipeline would have on local and threatened boreal caribou herds. They were consistently rebuffed.[42]

There is tension between the government's commitments to implement UNDRIP, its support for accelerated oil and gas industry developments in the province and its continued support for a failing energy industry regulator.

"When the Commission's initial response to their concerns is to tell the Fort Nelson First Nation it will not discuss them, and that the Commission is satisfied that the Project will not have a material adverse effect on the ability of wildlife within the ungulate winter range to provide for the survival of boreal caribou within it, it cannot be said that the Commission was willing to engage in consultation," Madam Justice Gerow wrote in her decision.

The same First Nation's lands were the subject of the caribou audit described earlier in this report. The Nation twice asked for a copy of that audit but never received one. Only after a copy was leaked and obtained by the CCPA–BC did the Fort Nelson First Nation finally receive a copy. It remains to be seen whether the commission's track record with First Nations will improve now that all provincial cabinet ministers—including the Minister of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources—have been instructed in their mandate letters from the premier to adopt and implement the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.[43]

Clearly, there is tension between the government's commitments to implement UNDRIP, its support for accelerated oil and gas industry developments in the province and its continued support for a failing energy industry regulator. The recommendations that follow would go some way to reconcile those tensions.

42 Supreme Court of British Columbia, "The Fort Nelson First Nation v. BC Oil and Gas Commission," 2017 BCSC 2500, December 15, 2017.

43 Mandate letter to Michelle Mungall, Minister of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources, July 18, 2017. The letter notes in part that the government is "fully adopting and implementing" the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and that the minister is to review relevant policies, programs and legislation to "bring the principles of the declaration into action." The minister has responsibility for the OGC.

Recommendations

THE FOLLOWING RECOMMENDATIONS ARE NOT AN endorsement for the ongoing, let alone accelerated, development of fossil fuel resources in BC. The CCPA–BC, along with 16 other organizations—including First Nations, unions, public health associations and environmental groups—continues to call for a full public inquiry into all aspects of natural gas industry operations throughout the province in light of the profoundly negative impacts that the industry has on climate change, shared and irreplaceable water resources, and human health and safety.[44] The irrefutable evidence that greenhouse gas emissions are altering the earth's climate means that fossil fuel developments of all kinds must be aggressively wound down, not wound up.

Until such time as fossil fuel extraction in BC is completely wound down, there is a compelling need to reform the way in which the energy industry regulator operates.

The provincial government has offered no credible blueprint to date for how the province can promote continued fossil fuel industry expansion while simultaneously cutting greenhouse gas emissions. In fact, even the government's recent CleanBC climate action plan falls short of meeting the government's stated greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets—a reality addressed in our sixth recommendation. Until such time as fossil fuel extraction in BC is completely wound down, however, there is a compelling need to reform the way in which the energy industry regulator operates. The following six recommendations would go some way to doing that.

Recommendation 1

Create a new, arm's-length agency to oversee compliance and enforcement in the fossil fuel sector.

At present, the OGC both issues approvals for oil and gas industry activities and is responsible for ensuring that all companies in the fossil fuel industry comply with environmental regulations. The idea of separating an agency's permitting functions from its regulatory oversight functions is not new and has been articulated forcefully on at least two occasions by BC's Auditor General and by an all-party provincial legislative committee.

In 2016, BC Auditor General Carol Bellringer reported on the lack of effective regulation of the province's mining industry. The report followed the horrific events at the Mount Polley mine, where a tailings pond failed, triggering one of the worst environmental disasters in BC history.

44 Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives' BC Office, "The Urgent Need for a Full Public Inquiry into Fracking in BC," Group letter to John Horgan and Michelle Mungall, December 6, 2017. https://policyalternatives.ca/newsroom/news-releases/urgent-need-full-public-inquiry-fracking-bc.

Bellringer said that to have a credible shot at avoiding another Mount Polley–like disaster, the government needed to "remove" compliance and enforcement powers from the Ministry of Energy and Mines (MEM) and turn it over to another agency. "MEM's role to promote mining developments is diametrically opposed to compliance and enforcement. This framework, of having both activities within MEM, creates an irreconcilable conflict," Bellringer wrote.[45]

A similar conclusion was reached nine years earlier when a special committee of the Legislative Assembly of British Columbia, consisting of members from the governing and opposition parties, reported to the legislature on sustainable aquaculture in the province. The committee noted then that while BC claimed to "have the most stringent regulatory regime" with regard to fish farms, there were "key areas" where oversight of the industry could be strengthened. One problem the committee identified was the inherent tension within the lead agency tasked with overseeing the industry, the Ministry of Agriculture and Lands.

"There must be a clear division between Ministry of Agriculture and Lands and the Ministry of Environment. Programs that promote aquaculture development should be within the Ministry of Agriculture and Lands. All protection, regulation and monitoring of the aquaculture industry must be within the mandate of the Ministry of Environment." [46]

What is needed is a separate agency with a clear mandate to protect the environment and do the monitoring and enforcement work that the OGC has shown itself incapable of doing.

With evidence that the OGC clearly failed to enforce relevant regulations in three cases involving multiple violations, the need for a "clear division" between the promotional or permitting arm of the OGC and its powers to monitor and enforce regulations is uncontestable.

What is needed is a separate agency with a clear mandate to protect the environment and do the monitoring and enforcement work that the OGC has shown itself incapable of doing.

Recommendation 2

Restructure the OGC's board, remove its powers to change regulations and restore regulation-making powers to an accountable energy ministry.

The OGC was granted extraordinary powers under the Oil and Gas Activities Act to change the act's regulations. The regulatory change benefitted the industry. It was clearly not in the public interest.

The provincial government should embrace a "Three R" policy with respect to reforming the OGC board. First, the OGC board should be restructured to remove the deputy minister from that body and thereby curb the government's power to influence precisely what the agency does. Second, the board's extraordinary powers to change regulations should be removed. And third, the power to change existing regulations or make new regulations under the act should be restored to the Minister of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources, who must answer to the legislature and to the general public for any changes made.

45 Office of the Auditor General of British Columbia, *An Audit of Compliance and Enforcement of the Mining Sector* (Victoria: Office of the Auditor General of BC, 2016), 4. https://www.bcauditor.com/sites/default/files/publications/reports/OAGBC%20Mining%20Report%20FINAL.pdf.

46 Special Committee on Sustainable Aquaculture, *Final Report, Volume 1*. (Victoria: Legislative Assembly of BC, 38th Parl, 3rd Sess, May 2007), 30. https://www.leg.bc.ca/content/legacy/Web/cmt/38thParl/session-3/aquaculture/reports/PDF/Rpt-AQUACULTURE-38-3-Volume1-2007-MAY-16.pdf.

Recommendation 3

Create new co-management or co-governance agreements with First Nations.

For years, many BC First Nations have complained about the lack of an effective governing body to address "cumulative impacts." These impacts are more pronounced for First Nations living in the northeast of the province because those Nations are subject to the numerous harmful environmental impacts associated with fossil fuel extraction in that area, impacts that are largely absent elsewhere in the province.

As noted in previous CCPA reports, there is historic precedent in BC for establishing co-management boards where the provincial government and First Nations work together directly on resource management issues.[47] A notable example is the board that came about because of the Haida Nation's longstanding concerns about forest management and conservation on the Haida Gwaii archipelago. Such a governing body is clearly needed in northeastern BC to address outstanding First Nations concerns about multiple gas industry developments and their negative cumulative impacts on land and water resources.

First Nations living in the northeast of the province are subject to the numerous harmful environmental impacts associated with fossil fuel extraction in that area.

Creating such a body would clearly help the province meet its commitment to First Nations in particular, and to the public more generally, to implement UNDRIP. Such a body would be tasked with proactively addressing proposed developments over broad geographical areas and setting mutually-agreed-to curbs on development. Such decisions would then guide the energy industry regulator in its relations with First Nations.

Recommendation 4

Reinstate a single water authority to regulate all water users.

Water is critical to all life and is our most important natural resource.

This paper has presented evidence that the OGC failed to manage water resources in the interest of the public—and more specifically in the interest of residents in northeastern BC—when it allowed waters to be diverted and numerous dams to be built there without authorization. The Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development (FLNRORD) has the authority to review and approve all water allocations in the province and, under the Water Sustainability Act, now has the responsibility for groundwater as well.

In anticipation of the new Water Sustainability Act being implemented, the ministry received an additional $4.28 million in fiscal year 2015/2016, $8.21 million in 2016/2017 and $9.25 million in 2017/2018. The vast majority of that additional funding, ministry spokesperson Vivian Thomas said in response to questions from the CCPA, was for new staff to support the ministry's added groundwater management responsibilities.[48] FLNRORD's increased funding and powers to regulate groundwater, coupled with its historic expertise in water allocation across all sectors and all regions of the province, makes it the most-qualified organization to address the broad range of water uses throughout BC and to determine what makes collective sense from a management perspective.

47 Ben Parfitt, *Fracking, First Nations and Water: Respecting Indigenous Rights and Better Protecting Our Shared Resources* (Vancouver: Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, BC Office, 2017). https://www.policyalternatives.ca/sites/default/files/uploads/publications/BC%20Office/2017/06/ccpa-bc_Fracking-FirstNations-Water_Jun2017.pdf.

48 Vivian Thomas. Personal communication. June 25, 2018.

To restore public confidence that clean and abundant water supplies are available for current and future generations, it is imperative that no single industry be able to play by one set of rules while everyone else plays by another. The OGC's responsibilities to assign water rights should be rescinded and all such authority transferred to a single ministry with direct responsibility to protect water resources. FLNRORD is currently that ministry, and its budget and staff should be increased to reflect the additional costs of overseeing water allocations to energy companies.

Recommendation 5

Compel the OGC to release all information that is in the public interest in a timely manner.

On three occasions in one year, the OGC withheld information that should have been immediately released to the public.

On three occasions in one year, the OGC withheld information that should have been immediately released to the public. In all three cases, the commission ultimately released the information but only after the agency became aware that outside sources had obtained copies of suppressed documents or knew that the agency was withholding them. Such behaviour rightly leads to public distrust and creates the impression that the OGC is held captive to the interests of the industry it regulates.

The OGAA should be rewritten to make releasing information to the public mandatory and the OGC board should be instructed to penalize anyone within the agency who attempts to withhold documents that are in the public interest. Because of the need to protect privacy at times, some information may need to be withheld. But in the three instances noted in this report, it is clear that plenty of information could have been released without violating BC's Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.

Recommendation 6

Compel the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy to report annually on how the OGC's permitting decisions and regulatory oversight of the fossil fuel industry fit within the province's climate action plans and greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets.

With the announcement that a consortium of natural gas producers led by Royal Dutch Shell intends to build a large liquefied natural gas facility in Kitimat, the BC government faces significant challenges to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the province.

Previous work by CCPA–BC senior economist Marc Lee concludes that the facility's overall emissions, combined with all emissions associated with "upstream" natural gas drilling, fracking and processing, would be in the range of nine to 12 million tonnes of carbon dioxide per year. At the high end, Lee notes, "these new committed emissions from LNG Canada would double the province's emissions from the oil and gas sector."[49]

Lee also concluded following the recent release of the provincial government's CleanBC climate change plan that despite the plan's best intentions, it falls short of delivering on the government's promise to deliver a 40 per cent reduction in BC's greenhouse gas emissions (based on 2007 emission levels) by the year 2030. Lee notes that in total the various plans outlined by the

49 Marc Lee, "LNG Is Incompatible with BC's Climate Obligations," *PolicyNote*, Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, July 11, 2018. https://www.policynote.ca/lng-is-incompatible-with-bcs-climate-obligations/.

government only get us 75 per cent of the way there, and only if everything envisioned in the plan actually materializes.[50]

This makes it imperative that there be rigorous, public accounting of greenhouse gas emissions in the fossil fuel sector. To be credible, such accounting must be at arm's length from the OGC and is a natural fit for the lead ministry tasked with environmental protection.

Conclusion

Since the spring of 2017, evidence has mounted that the OGC has failed on numerous occasions to hold the industry it regulates to account. This comes as no surprise given the circumstances that gave rise to the captured regulator and which are the focus of this report.

Fossil fuel resources in BC, as in other Canadian provinces, belong to the people. Companies that exploit such resources do so with the permission of provincial governments. Those governments are supposed to ensure that natural resources are exploited in a manner that, at a minimum, meets all relevant acts and regulations. When those rules are routinely violated, it is time for an overhaul.

The six recommendations in this report would help to improve how the industry is regulated, thereby bringing more protection to the environment and to public health and safety. But it must be repeated: continued exploitation and combustion of fossil fuels deepens a worsening climate crisis. The fossil fuel industry must be rapidly wound down. These recommendations, then, are only a stopgap—a partial step toward a world in which such regulations are not needed because fossil fuels are left in the ground where they must be if a climate catastrophe is to be averted.

Continued exploitation and combustion of fossil fuels deepens a worsening climate crisis. The fossil fuel industry must be rapidly wound down.

50 Marc Lee, "BC's Shiny New Climate Plan: A Look under the Hood," *PolicyNote*, Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, December 17, 2018. https://www.policynote.ca/clean-bc/.

Appendix: From industry to regulator and back again

By Jason Tockman

THOSE ON THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND IN EXECUTIVE POSITIONS at the BC Oil and Gas Commission (OGC) have frequently come from natural resource extraction sectors, especially the oil and natural gas industries—and it is common for former OGC leaders to be hired into positions in the very sectors that the commission regulates. This revolving door can be observed in the career trajectories of nearly a dozen of the highest-ranking officials at the OGC, constituting more than half of the commission's present and past leadership dating back to the regulator's founding in 1998.

It is common for former OGC leaders to be hired into positions in the very sectors that the commission regulates.

Current OGC leadership

Of the seven current board members and vice presidents, four have served in varying capacities for resource extraction firms before or concurrent with their roles with the OGC. The OGC's current executive vice president, Chief Engineer Mayka Kennedy, has 19 years' experience working for the oil and gas sector,[51] including for Schlumberger Limited (1998–2010),[52] one of the world's largest oil and gas services companies.

Ken Paulson, the OGC's current executive vice president and chief operating officer, has worked for the provincial and federal governments since 1999. Before that, he was a senior engineer for ATCO Gas (1991–1998), Alberta's largest distributor of natural gas.[53] Paulson sits on the board of

51 BC Oil and Gas Commission, "Executive Bios," Oil and Gas Commission website. Accessed June 12, 2019. https://www.bcogc.ca/about-us/executive-bios.

52 From her LinkedIn profile. Accessed January, 2018.

53 From his LinkedIn profile. Accessed January, 2018.

the Society of Petroleum Engineers and is the vice chair of the Western Regulators Forum,[54] which has been described as an interprovincial alliance of regulatory agencies "working to increase efficiency in the process of approving energy projects."[55] He also served as a board member of the International Petroleum Technology Institute.[56]

According to the commission's website, Paul Jeakins, OGC's commissioner, CEO and board vice chair (2011–present), was "a professional forester and partner in a resource consulting firm" before joining the commission in 2006.[57] From 1989 to 2006, Jeakins was the founding partner and director of Kokanee Forests Consulting, a "full service Resource Consulting Firm."[58] He presently serves as board chair of the Western Regulators Forum[59] and is on the board of directors of Petroleum Technology Alliance Canada, a business association that focuses on technology research and development in the oil and gas industry.[60]

A fourth person in an OGC leadership role, Trevor Swan, OGC executive vice president and chief legal and regulatory officer, has worked in the forestry and oil and gas sectors as a "natural resource lawyer and professional forester."[61] From 1996 to 2010, Swan was the president of the consulting firm Common Ground Forestry.[62] He presently serves on the governing council of the Association of BC Forest Professionals[63] and was chair of the Private Managed Forest Land Council from 2004 to 2011.[64]

Past OGC leadership

Many past commissioners and executives of the Oil and Gas Commission exhibit a pattern of movement between public service and the sectors regulated by the OGC.

Many past commissioners and executives of the OGC exhibit a pattern of movement between public service and the sectors regulated by the OGC. The tradition dates back to the OGC's first commissioner and chair of the board, Robert McManus (1998–2001), who worked in "key environmental and regulatory positions" with the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers (CAPP), Shell Canada Limited and Gulf Canada Resources prior to his role as commissioner.[65] After his term as commissioner, McManus returned to the private sector as vice president of

54 "Panel: Building Public Trust," Young Pipeliners Association of Canada website. Accessed June 12, 2019. http://buildingtrust.ypacanada.com/panelists/.

55 Robert Tuttle, "Western Canadian Energy Regulators Unite Amid Pipeline Delays," *Bloomberg*, December 2, 2014. Accessed June 12, 2019. https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2014-12-02/western-canadian-energy-regulators-unite-amid-pipe-delays.

56 "Panel: Building Public Trust," Young Pipeliners Association of Canada website.

57 BC Oil and Gas Commission, "Board of Directors," Oil and Gas Commission website. Accessed June 12, 2019. https://www.bcogc.ca/about/board-directors/board-directors.

58 From his LinkedIn profile. Accessed January, 2018.

59 BC Oil and Gas Commission, "Board of Directors," Oil and Gas Commission website. Accessed June 12, 2019. https://www.bcogc.ca/about/board-directors/board-directors.

60 Petroleum Technology Alliance Canada, "Board of Directors," Petroleum Technology Alliance Canada website. Accessed June 12, 2019. https://www.ptac.org/board-of-directors/.

61 From his LinkedIn profile. Accessed January, 2018.

62 Ibid.

63 Association of BC Forest Professionals, "Current Council," Association of BC Forest Professionals website. Accessed June 12, 2019. https://abcfp.ca/WEB/ABCFP/About_Us/Governance/ABCFP_Council/Current_Council/ABCFP/Governance/Council.aspx?hkey=1a3da5a0-680f-4c03-a6ce-b3d3e91e3a29.

64 Private Managed Forest Land Council, "Who We Are," Managed Forest Council website. Accessed June 12, 2019. http://mfcouncil.ca/about/who-we-are/.

65 "Backgrounder: Frontier Oil Sands Mine Project: Establishment of Joint Review Panel—Biographical Notes," Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency website. Accessed June 12, 2019. https://www.ceaa-acee.gc.ca/050/evaluations/document/114557?culture=en-CA. See also his LinkedIn profile. Accessed January, 2018.

government, environment and regulatory affairs for Calpine Canada and as president of Fulcrum Strategic Consulting, where he advised energy industry clients (e.g., CAPP, ConocoPhillips).[66]

After serving as CEO and commissioner of the OGC from 2007 to 2011, Alex Ferguson became a senior advisor to Apache Canada Ltd., a Texas-based oil and gas company, where he was involved with "identifying and managing high-risk exploration opportunities for hydrocarbon production" and had "lead responsibility for surface-risk elements, including government relations, regulatory affairs, media, public & community relations" (2011–2013).[67] He also served as vice president, policy and performance, for the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers (2013–2017), where his work involved "policy advocacy and government relations."[68] Prior to serving the OGC, Ferguson had been a forester for Canadian Forest Products Ltd. and Slocan Forest Products Ltd. from 1993 to 2006.[69]

Ross Curtis, OGC commissioner and CEO from 2006 to 2007, worked in minor positions for the real estate development company Genstar in the 1970s and 1980s but spent most of his previous career in the public sector.[70] Subsequent to his role at the OGC, Curtis established Ross Curtis Consulting, which is involved in "government relations" and "public policy" and provides "Energy & Mineral policy, regulatory, health, safety and environmental recommendations" to its clients.[71] Consistent with those consultancy services, a Ross Curtis acted as a lobbyist for Talisman Energy (now Repsol Oil & Gas Canada) in 2011 and for Cardero Coal (then a subsidiary of Cardero Resource Corp) in 2012.[72]

Prior to serving on the OGC board of directors from around 2009 to 2014, John Jacobsen was vice president of operations, Canadian drilling, for Precision Drilling Corporation, an oil and gas drilling company.[73] The Nanoose Volunteer Fire Department, where Jacobsen has served as director and chairman, elaborates on his career: "From 1995 through 2007 John served as Precision's representative and director for the Canadian Association of Oil Well Drilling Contractors... John has served and chaired on major industry service boards."[74]

Another member of the OGC board of directors was Greg Reimer, who served from 2005 to 2010. Reimer worked for the BC government from 1990 through 2010; he then transitioned to BC Hydro, a Crown corporation, where he worked as executive vice president, transmission and distribution, from 2010 through 2017.[75] At BC Hydro, Reimer "led the capital build-out and refurbishment of the transmission and distribution system infrastructure including completion of several new transmission lines" in BC.[76] Since August 2017, he has been a board member of LiCo Energy Metals Inc., a Vancouver-based exploration company that focuses on high-value metals for lithium-ion batteries.[77] Reimer has served on "many corporate and industry boards" and has held board and other leadership positions for the Canadian Electricity Association (the

66 Ibid.
67 From his LinkedIn profile. Accessed January, 2018.
68 Ibid.
69 Ibid.
70 From his LinkedIn profile. Accessed January, 2018.
71 Ibid.
72 Office of the Registrar of Lobbyists of BC. Registry of Lobbyists. Accessed June 12, 2019. https://justice.gov.bc.ca/lra/reporting/public/advanceSearch.do.
73 Precision Drilling Corporation, *1998 Annual Report* (Calgary: Precision Drilling Corporation, 1998), 64. http://www.annualreports.com/HostedData/AnnualReportArchive/p/TSX_PD.UN_1998.pdf.
74 See "Nanoose Fire Protection Society," Nanoose Volunteer Fire Department website. Accessed June 12, 2019. http://nanoosevfd.com/about/nfps/.
75 From his LinkedIn profile. Accessed January, 2018.
76 Ibid.
77 Ibid.

self-described "voice" of Canadian electricity businesses), Edison Electric Institute, Powertech Labs (a subsidiary of BC Hydro), Western Electric Industry Leaders (an electric energy delivery network) and the Western Energy Institute (which facilitates communication among electric and natural gas professionals).[78]

John Bechtold, OGC board member from 2003 to 2007, has over 40 years experience in the energy industry, including working for oil and natural gas firms.[79] From his early work with Gulf Oil Corporation and Gulf Canada, Bechtold went on to work as vice president of Western Canada Oil and Gas of Petro-Canada until 2000 and became an independent director of Parkland Fuel Corporation in 2006.[80] He has also served in leadership positions at Parex Resources (2009–2017) and Petro Andina Resources (since 2008) as well as for the Industry Advisory Board to the International Energy Agency, the Canadian Energy Research Institute and the Canadian Propane Gas Association.[81]

Finally, Joyce Beaudry, deputy commissioner of the Oil and Gas Commission from 2002 to 2003, spent most of her career in public service: as the OGC's leader of relationships and client services,[82] and with the Crown corporation Forest Renewal BC, as director of Integrated Land Management, and regional director of the Ministry of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources.[83] However, Beaudry has broader "experience in mining, oil and gas and forestry within both the industry and government sectors." For example, from 2011 to 2013 she worked for Shell Canada in contract safety management.[84]

78 Ibid.

79 "Parkland Fuel Corp: Executive Profile, John Frederick Bechtold," *Bloomberg*. Accessed June 12, 2019. https://www.bloomberg.com/research/stocks/people/person.asp?personId=352883&privcapId=875094.

80 Ibid.

81 Ibid.

82 "Deputy Commissioner Appointed," Oil and Gas Commission press release, December 10, 2003. Accessed June 12, 2019. https://www.bcogc.ca/node/5629/download.

83 From her LinkedIn profile. Accessed January, 2018.

84 Ibid.

CORPORATE
MAPPING PROJECT

The Corporate Mapping Project is shining a bright light on the fossil fuel industry by investigating the ways corporate power is organized and exercised. The initiative is a partnership of academic and community-based researchers and advisors who share a commitment to advancing reliable knowledge that supports citizen action and transparent public policy making.

www.corporatemapping.ca

C C P A
CANADIAN CENTRE
for POLICY ALTERNATIVES
BC Office

The Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives is an independent, non-partisan research institute concerned with issues of social, economic and environmental justice. Founded in 1980, it is one of Canada's leading progressive voices in public policy debates.

520 – 700 West Pender Street
Vancouver, BC V6C 1G8
604.801.5121 | ccpabc@policyalternatives.ca

www.policyalternatives.ca