

Woodfibre LNG doesn't meet public engagement standards

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Woodfibre LNG is not meeting its standard for engaging the local community, according to the District of Squamish.

In a response to the provincial Environment Assessment Office (EAO), district said public information provided by WLNG was minimal and didn't meet its expectations for engaging and informing the community.

"Submitting an extension application and processing it in midst of a global health crisis, including limited or no opportunities for any form of public engagement according to our engagement principles is a very inappropriate time to deal with this issue," district said.

The district's letter to EAO was in response to a five-year extension sought by company for its environmental certificate.

The district also said Woodfibre LNG's declarations and plans should also address the "significantly altered" economic climate. Part of the feedback was resolution related to greenhouse gas emissions the council sent to the EAO.

On May 12, council passed a resolution stating that it doesn't support an extension of the certificate unless the extension includes a condition that Woodfibre LNG meets the IPCC targets to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by 45% by 2030 and 100% by 2050.

The motion was put forward by Councillor Jenna Stoner, and supported by Mayor Karen

Elliott and councillors Armand Hurford and Chris Pettingill.

Councillors John French, Eric Andersen and Doug Race opposed the motion. The motion isn't final yet and will be up for debate again at a council meeting.

Woodfibre LNG was surprised and disappointed to read the council's resolution, said David Keane, the company's president.

Keane said WLNG had been an active member of the Squamish community for seven years, and had consistently gone above and beyond to engage with council and residents.

He also said that climate change was an urgent global issue, and that the company committed early on to reduce its emissions by 85% by using renewable electricity.

"We have recently received new data on our project's climate change impact, which we look forward to sharing with the public soon. One figure we have learned is that the annual emissions offsets that will be achieved when our gas replaces coal in Asia will be equivalent to 76 years of Squamish's emissions," he said.

Keane said Woodfibre LNG held the promise of hundreds of direct jobs, thousands of indirect jobs and millions of investment dollars into our community.

"We hope that council will consider these positive impacts when debating this resolution," he said.