

Ta'Kaiya Blaney



Ten-year-old home schooled Ta'Kaiya Blaney studied Sea Otters for her Science assignment. She discovered that Sea Otters were integral to keeping a healthy kelp forest, as well as oil being the leading cause of death among Sea Otters.

A musician since she was four years old, she wanted to write a song to bring attention to the dangers of oil spill in the oceans. Ta'Kaiya had heard of the Exxon Valdez oil spill and decided to write a song "Shallow Waters". While writing her song with her music teacher, the oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico suddenly happened.

Ta'Kaiya had wanted to take her message to the corporation Enbridge office in Vancouver BC but was denied entry. Concerned about environmental issues, she stood outside, accompanied by three members of Greenpeace, her mother, and a number of reporters and sang her song "Shallow Waters." The song is now on YouTube.

Enbridge's bid to build twin 1,170 km pipelines to transport oil from the Alberta tar sands to British Columbia's north coast is widely opposed, largely because it would bring hundreds of oil supertankers a year to the Great Bear Rainforest—an ecologically significant region along a particularly dangerous route for tankers.

Though Ta'Kaiya recognises that oil pipelines and tankers will give people jobs, she reminds her fellow citizens that if there is an oil spill like the recent BP spill in the Gulf of Mexico, some people's jobs will be lost and the wildlife will die.

According to a Greenpeace website, "Twenty-two years after the Exxon Valdez tragedy, crude oil still coats Alaska's shores. Exxon Valdez Oil Spill Trustee Council estimates that 21,000 gallons of the 11 million gallons of crude oil that bled from the stranded tanker Exxon Valdez on the night of March 23, 1989 remain in the subsurface."

Dustin Johnson, a Tsimshian youth who works in Edmonton, tells us that the tankers that are proposed to transport tar sands crude from northern Alberta to the B.C. north coast are much larger than the Exxon Valdez. He warns that if the tar sands pipelines are successfully built on the coast, this would lead to at least 250 tankers per year navigating the intricate B.C. coastline—a risk the salmon- and ocean-dependent Northwest coast communities and economies cannot afford to take.

British Columbia's premier Clark said the B.C. government supports the ongoing environmental review, a process that has met much criticism from some societal groups.

Meanwhile, Ta'Kaiya has been on television giving interviews, on newspapers, magazines, and internet news promoting her message to save the environment.