



# Hartley Bay Band Council

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## MEDIA ADVISORY ATTENTION ASSIGNMENT EDITORS

April 8, 2009.  
For Immediate Release.

### **SPRING BRINGS WHALES HOME TO GITGA'AT TERRITORY NEW WORRIES SURFACE**

The Gitga'at First Nation at Hartley Bay, deep in the heart of the Great Bear Rainforest, is marking the return of spring with the return of Killer Whales. A network of underwater microphones in Gitga'at territorial waters is transmitting the "musical conversations" of orcas that will soon be joined by humpbacks coming home from a winter vacation near Hawaii. While the Gitga'at listen in on their "all whale all the time" radio station they worry about the future.

A project proposed by Enbridge would bring oil tankers bigger than the Exxon Valdez right over the heads of the whales and other sea life. The ships, loaded at Kitimat with dirty oil from Alberta's tar sands, would travel a narrow and treacherous route to the Pacific Ocean, right past the waterfront doorstep of Hartley Bay.

The biggest concern for the Gitga'at is an oil spill, but research shows the noise from the ship's massive engines can also cause harm, as does the wake they generate.

Cetacealab, which is dedicated to the research and protection of BC's whales, was established in 2001 on Gil Island, in Gitga'at territory. Cetacealab has registered an increasing whale population, with 2008 described as an extremely busy year for whale activity. Spokesman Hermann Meuter says, "We at Cetacealab are deeply worried about the prospect of oil tankers. The threats to this unique part of the planet are immense". The Gitga'at are sounding the alarm about the Enbridge project. They fear disaster for themselves and for the rich and diverse landscape where they have co-existed with the whales and the Spirit Bear for centuries. The Gitga'at and the founders of the Cetacealab see only impacts and risks and no benefits from the proposed Northern Gateway Pipeline Project.

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For more information about the Gitga'at – [www.gitgaat.net](http://www.gitgaat.net)

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