



# CACP PWIP Social Justice Sub-Committee

Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police (CACCP)  
Policing with Indigenous Peoples Committee (PWIP)

## Situational Awareness: Ongoing Opposition to Coastal GasLink

### Background:

Opposition to construction of the Coastal GasLink (CGL) Pipeline in the area of Houston, British Columbia has been ongoing since 2009. There is division within community groups and between traditional and elected leadership with respect to the project. Some Wet'suwet'en Hereditary Chiefs are strongly opposed while the elected Wet'suwet'en Council has publicly called for a resolution to the pipeline conflict, and all 20 First Nations along the pipeline route have signed agreements with CGL. This issue acts as a natural point of convergence where issues impacting Indigenous peoples and the environment intersect. A series of demonstrations and blockades of construction activities over the last several years have resulted in multiple arrests. In December 2018, a permanent injunction was granted to CGL, prohibiting further construction delays. Enforcement efforts in 2019, 2020, and 2021 led to national and international solidarity demonstrations, which were staged in an attempt to attract attention to the issue and to obtain the intervention of government entities. Solidarity demonstrations have been held in both rural and urban areas and occupations have taken place at the offices of government and financial institutions. There have also been blockades of roads, railways, ports of entry, and highway slowdowns, among other instances of civil disobedience. In 2022 there has been an escalation in tactics from individuals opposed to the project, creating safety concerns.

### Update:

Individuals opposed to the CGL Pipeline have occupied a recreation area located at the junction of the Morice River and Lamprey Creek, where they have strategically positioned a fortified camp with various points of entry. A large structure, described by occupiers as a "Feast Hall" for use by the Gidimt'en Clan and wider Wet'suwet'en Nation, has been constructed at the site. Occupiers are also sharing a narrative that a traditional village is being rebuilt to provide an area for cultural and hunting activities. In a nearby location, pipeline opponents have erected a log cabin, strategically positioned to block access to a right-of-way where CGL is preparing to tunnel under the Morice River.

Several of the Wet'suwet'en hereditary chiefs opposed to the pipeline recently concluded an 18-day tour across Canada. Media articles noted that the tour was aimed at building solidarity with other Indigenous groups over "shared concerns about land ownership and consent to development".



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Construction of the CGL Pipeline is nearing completion, with tunneling under the Morice River one of the remaining activities. If an agreement is not reached to remove the impediments to construction activities, CGL is expected to serve formal notice requesting removal. If removal does not occur, it is likely that a call for service will be placed with the RCMP. Current information suggests that this call for service is most likely to occur in mid-September. Ongoing construction is expected to be opposed by demonstrators, increasing the likelihood of future enforcement action.

## Future Outlook:

It is likely that resumption of remaining pipeline construction in Wet'suwet'en traditional territory will represent a 'last stand' for demonstrators opposed to the project, and that perceptions of subsequent police enforcement could lead to solidarity demonstrations outside of British Columbia.

Past calls to action from opponents have resulted in significant solidarity actions held with little advance warning. In past years, a similar compilation of behaviours, such as social media campaigning, cross country tours and direct blocks of construction activities have led to demonstrations, blockades and occupations in British Columbia and beyond. Should solidarity demonstrations occur, it is possible that a broad cross section of society could take an interest or actively provide support.

The interconnectedness among some Indigenous communities has been evident in past instances of solidarity related to this issue, with action in one community resulting in heightened tension in other Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities.

In the event of solidarity demonstrations, police services should ensure to reference the CACP PWIP *National Framework for Police Preparedness for Demonstrations and Assemblies*, and to outreach with community contacts to work with influencers to ensure that any demonstrations held are lawful, peaceful, and safe and to encourage open and transparent dialogue.

For further information see:

[https://cacp.ca/policing-with-first-nations-metis-and-inuit-peoples-committee.html?asst\\_id=2098](https://cacp.ca/policing-with-first-nations-metis-and-inuit-peoples-committee.html?asst_id=2098)

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