



# The Brief

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## Red Head: end of the line for Energy East oil pipeline? Support Mi'kmaq land defender Annie Clair

By TRACY GLYNN



Lynaya Astephen, a resident of Red Head, participating at the Act on Climate March in Quebec City in March 2015. Photo by Tracy Glynn.

Lynaya Astephen settled in Red Head seven years ago because of its natural setting along the Bay of Fundy. Astephen describes the East Saint John community as family-friendly where 1,500 people co-exist with wildlife. She never imagined that an oil tank farm would move in and be her neighbour.

“The field and forest that surround our home will be replaced with an oil tank farm, part of the Energy East tar sands pipeline,” says Astephen. “We’re the end of the line for Energy East. Many people in our community oppose it because of fears of cancer and the wiping out of nature.”

Astephen is part of a new association called the Red Head and Anthony’s Cove Preservation Association that aims to protect Red Head in the face of TransCanada’s Energy East proposal.

TransCanada plans to pump 1.1 million barrels of crude bitumen from the Alberta tar sands to a new marine terminal in Red Head. Besides a marine terminal, an oil tank farm is planned to be built to store the oil prior to export. TransCanada plans to lease land from Irving Oil for the oil tank farm. The tank farm would receive pipeline and rail line crude oil. Irving Oil has already purchased 16 properties in the Red Head area.

Premier Brian Gallant is an ardent supporter of the Energy East pipeline. But according to the Red Head and Anthony’s Cove Preservation Association, the risks of the pipeline will outweigh the benefits, noting that the pipeline will create only a handful of permanent jobs after its construction.

### What is planned for the “end of the line”

Red Head is already affected by the oil and gas industry. Besides oil and gas pipelines, a total of 11 million barrels of crude oil is already stored in large

tank farms at the Irving Marine Terminal and the Irving Oil Refinery within a 9-km radius of Red Head. Energy East would add another 6 to 8 million barrels of bitumen in heated oil tanks.

Volatile gases build up in the heated tanks full of bitumen. Once vented into the air, the toxic fumes can travel for miles downwind. According to a 2003 Shell Bitumen Handbook, bitumen fumes from heated storage tanks can “result in the irritation to the eyes, nose and respiratory tract and headaches and nausea.” Emissions from storage tanks can include benzene, polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons and hydrogen sulfide, a deadly neurotoxin.

A 2004 World Health Organization study on bitumen fumes reported that health effects are understudied yet serious. Workers exposed to fumes can suffer from a variety of respiratory and skin ailments. Studies on road workers exposed to bitumen fumes say long-term health effects can include cancer, reduced lung function and DNA damage.

Residents of Red Head and East Saint John, including Champlain Heights and Forest Hills, already breathe air with benzene and other VOCs at levels that exceed safe human health guidelines.

Air quality monitoring done in 2012 and 2013 revealed that air in the Red Head area had benzene levels of around 0.45 ppb. Ontario has set safe benzene levels at 0.14 ppb. New Brunswick, like Canada, has not established a safe guideline for the amount of benzene, a known carcinogen, in the air.

“Residents of Saint John are already subject to 38 times the industrial pollution released in Fredericton and 243 times the amount released in Moncton,” says Inka Milewski, an independent researcher who has studied the links between cancer and industrial pollution in New Brunswick.



Annie Clair, a Mi'kmaq grandmother from Elsipogtog (centre), will be heading to court in Moncton in September 2015 to face charges related to her defense of Mi'kmaq land against shale gas in October 2013. Clair is pleading not guilty to charges including mischief and resisting arrest. To support Clair's legal defence fund, send an email transfer to supportannie@riseup.net

“Saint John is already home to the largest oil refinery in the country, yet remarkably, there has never been a community health assessment done in the city, as was done in Belledune in 2005. The only health study done to-date found that residents of Saint John had lung cancer rates more than 30 per cent higher than the provincial rate and rates in Moncton or Fredericton. Prior to allowing more polluting industries into the community, the real health impacts of existing industries on residents and workers need to be accurately assessed. Relying on industry to use hypothetical health risk models to predict the health status of residents is simply not enough,” maintains Milewski.

Six families moved away from Alberta’s Peace River region after similar oil tanks moved near their community and affected their health. “I see the health effects on my boys, the tremendous traffic on the roads and I can smell the bitumen,” Thea Breau told Andrew Nikiforuk for a story for *The Tyee* in 2013. Air pollution from Baytex Energy’s heated bitumen storage tanks south of Peace River is believed to have sickened many people, including farmers.

Back in Red Head, Astephen’s local fight has made her a climate activist. She promotes the transition to renewable energy and has joined the Peace and Friendship Alliance, a newly formed alliance of indigenous people and allies in New Brunswick that are working to honour the Peace and Friendship Treaties and fight destructive projects like Energy East. Astephen marched for climate action with 25,000 others in Quebec City in March.

“Being with 25,000 all for the same reason made me realize that we are all fighting for our environment together. What moved me was the urgent yet positive vibe that made me feel there is hope. All of us had the same purpose that day to move our provincial and federal governments to take action,” says Astephen.

Tracy Glynn is a news writer and editor with the NB Media Co-op.

# NB government ignores glyphosate health threat as opposition grows

By DALLAS McQUARRIE



**Woodlot owners and woods workers stood in solidarity with two men who faced fines for blocking a truck carrying the forest herbicide glyphosate at the Miramichi Courthouse on April 30. They say New Brunswick’s forestry spraying program poses a serious threat to people’s health and is killing wildlife, including moose and deer, by wiping out their food source.** Photo by Yvon Goguen.

St. Ignace – Two Rogersville area men, Romeo Martin and Laurie Richard, have been sentenced to six months probation by a Miramichi court for their part in a protest last fall against the spraying of glyphosate herbicide on provincial forests. Charges of mischief against the pair were dropped during their April 30 court appearance. Protests against the use of glyphosate are increasing.

Opponents to glyphosate take little comfort in provincial government claims that New Brunswick’s forestry spraying program is safe. A March 2015 report by an agency of the World Health Organization (WHO) says the herbicide glyphosate is, in fact, a serious threat to public health, labeling it a “probable carcinogen.”

That report is fueling increased public opposition to and demonstrations against the use of glyphosate in New Brunswick. A demonstration dubbed the ‘March Against Monsanto’ and scheduled for Moncton City Hall on Saturday, May 23, at 1:00 p.m. was already being planned when news came that glyphosate had been linked to cancer in humans.

The provincial government is ignoring the cancer warning and continuing to insist that spraying glyphosates over vast tracts of the province is nothing to worry about. In contrast, the report by WHO’s International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) declared that glyphosate (which has been sprayed on forests and farmland across New Brunswick for years) damages human DNA and chromosomes. IARC, respected internationally for its expertise on cancer, also found convincing evidence that glyphosate causes cancer in animals. It also linked the herbicide to non-Hodgkins lymphoma in people.

Glyphosate use has increased sharply since the development of genetically modified, or ‘GMO’d’ crops that are resistant to glyphosate. As well as

agriculture and forestry, the herbicide is also used in urban settings, and has been detected in the air during spraying, as well as in water and in food.

Successive provincial governments in New Brunswick have denied or denigrated claims that glyphosate is highly dangerous to both people and animals. IARC’s research linking the herbicide to cancer and DNA and chromosomal damage have stripped government and corporate claims that the chemical is safe of any scientific credibility.

Forestry spraying has always been controversial in New Brunswick, and the IARC’s determination that glyphosate is dangerous to human and animal health vindicates what those protesting forest spraying programs have been saying for years. Approximately 15,000 ha of Crown forest is sprayed every year for softwood plantations. Concern is mounting among Kent County residents about young moose found dead this spring. Several residents believe the government’s forestry spraying program is hazardous to people and wiping out the food source of wildlife.

Glyphosates wipe out vegetation that is the food for moose, deer and other wildlife. Moose, deer, rabbits and other wildlife are primary sources of meat for many people in rural areas of New Brunswick. Leo Goguen is a woods worker in the Rogersville area who, speaking from experience, says the spraying of glyphosate on provincial forests “kills everything!”

The IARC’s damning report documenting glyphosate’s threat to human health, is also bolstering efforts to reduce or eliminate the use of highly toxic chemicals in connection with the production and marketing of both genetically modified seeds and food crops.

The report may also provide the impetus for forestry workers, food producers, and people who simply

want to eat healthy food to join hands in the common cause to stop the free and easy use of carcinogens in both food production and industrial applications.

Pamela Ross, one of the organizers for the Moncton demonstration against Monsanto, says the event is designed to help educate people about the dangers of genetically modified foods and seeds. Ross chairs the Moncton Chapter of the Council of Canadians and says the Council wants “a ban on GMO food and seeds or, at the very least, a requirement that such foods be labeled” so that people know what they’re eating.

Glyphosates and other herbicides are manufactured by the Monsanto Company, an American agro-chemical and biotechnology multinational corporation headquartered in Missouri. Monsanto’s development and marketing of genetically modified organisms (GMOs) have sparked opposition around the world.

*Dallas McQuarrie is a news writer with the NB Media Co-op and former CBC journalist.*

## In Brief



**Fredericton Youth Feminists held a “die-in” at the annual anti-choice “March for Life” Rally in Fredericton on May 14 to symbolically protest lives lost due to restricted access to abortion services.** Photo by Madeleine Berrevoets.

Despite support from the National Farmers Union in New Brunswick and other food security advocates, Fredericton South MLA David Coon’s **local food security bill** failed to pass in the Legislature on April 30. The bill sought to increase the percentage of fresh and processed food produced and consumed in New Brunswick; require public institutions such as schools and hospitals to increase the percentage of local food on their menus and to establish a local food labeling system. Dozens rallied and spoke to the media outside the Legislature just before the vote. The vote was 24 against the bill and 18 in support. Conservative MLAs voted in support of the bill. Rick Doucet, Minister of Agriculture, Aquaculture and Fisheries, promised that the Gallant government would bring forward another strategy that would be comprehensive and include fisheries. Those gathered in the Legislature gallery were kicked out when they heckled the Liberal MLAs as they voted against the food bill.

Roger LeBlanc, a retired miner from Eel River Crossing who blames his **illnesses on lead exposure** from working underground at the Xstrata Brunswick mine, marched at the NB Legislature on May 15. He spoke with some MLAs and the media outside the NB Legislature about his fight for compensation. LeBlanc carried a sign that read that the court of appeal found the appeal tribunal process for his case unfair. He would like to see the laws changed so that WorkSafe NB compensated workers like himself who suffer from heavy metal poisoning, silicosis and other industrial-related disease.

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## Community Calendar

For details and updated event listings, visit [nbmediacoop.org](http://nbmediacoop.org). To list your event, email: [community@nbmediacoop.org](mailto:community@nbmediacoop.org).

**Crisanta Perez in Fredericton.** Monday, June 8 at 7:00pm at Three Sisters Cafe, 289 Regent St. Crisanta Perez is the face of resistance to the Goldcorp Marlin gold mine in Guatemala. She has been criminalized but remains unwavering in her commitment to protect the land that she and her Maya Mam community depend on for life. Hear her and other indigenous land defenders speak. Contact: [btsmaritimes@gmail.com](mailto:btsmaritimes@gmail.com).