



Presentation to National Energy Board Hearings

Saint John, NB

November 11, 2006

Speaker: Bob Manning, Chairperson

Madame Chair and Panel Members, thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today.

My name is Bob Manning, and I am the current Chair of the Saint John Board of Trade. Here with me today is Imelda Gilman, President of the Board of Trade.

We represent a non-profit organization made up of over 600 businesses, associations and non-profit organizations, which cumulatively employ more than 30,000 people in the greater Saint John region. Established in 1819, the Saint John Board of Trade has a tradition of spearheading major initiatives that have had significant impact on the course of our city.

Saint John is a mid-sized city that, since its inception, has nurtured an enterprising and entrepreneurial spirit. In Atlantic Canada, it is small and medium-sized businesses that dominate the economic landscape - and our membership mirrors that. Of our members, 83% operate companies with less than 20 employees.

Saint John is a city built on trade. For centuries our harbour has shipped goods around the world; first furs and wood to Europe, now pulp and petroleum to American markets and beyond.

We have long enjoyed a natural business relationship with New England, to cities such as Boston, Portland, and of course, Bangor – and the Saint John business community has long supported a regional approach to economic development.

For these reasons, and for the reasons I will outline, the Saint John Board of Trade supports Emera Brunswick Pipeline's application and preferred corridor.

As I drove to these hearings today, I thought about how it is an interesting time to be living in Saint John. My drive is from my home in Millidgeville in the north, here to the mouth of the harbour and I realize it affords me an interesting perspective.

First, I pass by some large technology and customer contact centres, which employ so many of our young people. A decade ago these companies helped ignite a shift in Saint John that ushered in a wave of new technologies and new employers.

I passed the turnoff for the Saint John Regional Hospital and the University of New Brunswick's Saint John campus, two public institutions and members of the Board of Trade that have an integral role to play in our city's evolution. Post-secondary education, coupled with research and development are key to Saint John's future.

After that I crested over a hill that gave me a view of the Bay of Fundy and the City's skyline silhouetted before it. To the left of the Bay is the Irving Oil refinery, Canada's largest refinery; while to the right is Coleson Cove, New Brunswick's largest power plant.

The energy sector

It is literally sitting here, right before our eyes; and it is important to remember the enormous impact that the energy sector has on the economic growth and the life of a region.

For instance, a couple of blocks from here are the offices of Fundy Engineering - another member of the Board of Trade. Just a couple of years ago, Fundy's owner Gord Moulant, moved into that building because he was expanding and needed more space. The company started in 1989 with a few engineers and today it has grown to 29 employees.

That's the kind of impact the energy sector can have on small and medium-sized businesses, the very businesses we represent through the Saint John Board of Trade.

So that is what was on my mind as I drove in this afternoon.

There is one other place I passed on my way today: Rockwood Park.

It occupies a special place within the Greater Saint John community, both geographically – because it's basically in the centre of the city and region – and in the minds of citizens because so many of us use it. And we are proud to be home to one of the largest municipal parks in Canada.

I moved here three years ago with my family from the NY/NJ area of the United States. My wife is from Saint John and after considering where we would like to raise our five children, we agreed that Saint John offered us the lifestyle we wanted. As I mentioned, I live in Millidgeville, which is a great neighbourhood located between Rockwood Park and the Kennebecasis River. The Park is part of the appeal of moving to Millidgeville and I enjoy early morning runs through the park a few times each week. My wife and I take our children, and our dog there on weekends and we love it. It is important to me and to my family that Rockwood Park continues to be this wonderful green space and recreational area for residents and visitors to use and appreciate.

I believe Emera Brunswick Pipeline recognizes that.

Last week, I attended a special meeting of Saint John Common Council. I, like many of the councilors, was impressed when company President Robin McAdam assured council that a \$5.35 million community endowment was not dependent on City Council's support of the project, but rather would be offered regardless - provided the pipeline received regulatory approval.

As someone who uses Rockwood Park regularly, I'm very pleased with their offer.

Rockwood Park, in the past, has depended largely on public money. Because of that, there has not been a significant investment in Rockwood Park in over 10 years. The investment by Emera Brunswick Pipeline is going to help change that. The company will restore all land that the pipeline passes through within the City to a standard that is equal to or better than what existed prior to pipeline construction.

The company will construct two new entrances to Rockwood Park, including much-needed parking spaces. Emera Brunswick Pipeline will also expand and improve the extensive trail system. That is great news for fitness enthusiasts like me... for runners, walkers, cyclists and naturalist's who just like going for a walks.

I also think it is important to acknowledge Emera Brunswick's recognition that corporate citizenship is about more than just participating in economic development. It is about contributing to the overall life of a community.

Here in Saint John, this idea is embodied in the True Growth Strategy. This initiative was developed and is led by our 5 regional Mayors representing Saint John, Grand Bay-Westfield, Quispamsis, Rothesay and St. Martins.

The True Growth Strategy is a unified vision designed to strengthen and enhance our economic, social and cultural development.

The essence of True Growth is a belief that in order to stimulate and sustain true economic growth, the Saint John region must invest in and improve those things, such as cultural and recreational facilities, schools, hospitals and the social support network that will attract and retain workers and their families.

The Saint John Board of Trade supports True Growth's ideals and its priorities and we believe that the energy sector is one of the industries that will power that growth. Our aim is to continue to develop the Saint John region as the Energy Hub of the Maritimes.

The region has already benefited from a number of major energy investments including:

- A major upgrade at the Irving Oil refinery;
- The start of the refurbishment of the Point Lepreau nuclear generating station;
- The continued exploration for natural gas outside Sussex; and
- The start of construction on Canaport LNG, eastern Canada's first liquefied natural gas terminal.

And that leads us to why we are here today, considering Emera Brunswick Pipeline's application.

The Saint John Board of Trade believes it is important to work collaboratively with our community partners.

Our members are unpaid volunteers, as am I, who work hard to increase our business community's ability to attract and retain new investment, new business activities, and new employment opportunities.

In considering the merits of Emera Brunswick Pipeline's application, members of the Board of Trade spoke with the applicant, discussed the proposal with industry members, our membership, and with other people in Saint John.

For the Board of Trade, our first concern is one of safety and health.

We would like to commend Fire Chief Simonds and Emera Brunswick on their professionalism and willingness to work together to find appropriate resolutions to safety concerns. Our Board of Directors are assured by Emera Brunswick's plans to engage with the Saint John Fire Department and other first responders in southern New Brunswick in the development of Emergency Response Plans.

The Board of Trade's Directors also feel assured that the design and construction of the Brunswick Pipeline are guided by strict regulations and guidelines made by the National Energy Board and the Canada Standards Association. We are confident that the applicant is committed to taking the necessary steps to protect City infrastructure and the environment.

Originally, I am from Alberta. I grew up near Calgary – the town that energy built. I grew up with natural gas. It heated the home I lived in, it was the fuel of choice in the kitchen and we didn't worry about the pipeline running under our town's streets. We were just glad we had it.

Because of my personal experience with natural gas, I am confident that Emera Brunswick will take the necessary steps to look after city infrastructure and private property.

The Board of Trade is encouraged that City Council now supports this project on its merits. Discussion between the City and the Company has created greater understanding of route options, safety questions, protection of City infrastructure, and restoration concerns.

We are, of course, a business organization and our primary interest in this proposal is the economic benefits this type of large-scale, private-sector investment can stimulate in the Maritime region.

The most important benefit of the pipeline project is the addition of a long-term reliable natural gas supply, especially given the declining reserves at Sable Island. This will boost the Saint John economy and provide real opportunities to develop local talent and local business capacity in areas such as transportation, distribution and retail.

With the municipal and provincial tax revenue from this project, governments will be able to invest in the region – in its roads, schools, hospital and social services – to enhance life in Saint John and in New Brunswick.

As I have said, it is an interesting time to be living in Saint John!

Last spring, the Board of Trade co-hosted a regional business conference entitled “Reaching Atlantica.” Its aim was to initiate dialogue about creating a unified vision to further the development of a region of our country that for the better part of the last century was chronically underdeveloped.

Energy was one of the 3 topics we discussed because we all recognized that energy attracts a skilled workforce, thrives on innovation, and has a very large market waiting to be served along the eastern seaboard.

Emera Brunswick Pipeline is an essential piece of infrastructure for our growing energy sector.

And the Board of Trade supports the development of Saint John into a regional energy hub.

The Board of Trade supports the diversification of our domestic energy supply through projects such as Canaport LNG and this pipeline.

And so, it is only natural that the Saint John Board Of Trade supports Emera Brunswick Pipeline’s application and preferred corridor proposal for a land-based pipeline.

We ask that the NEB support this application too - and through it, the development of Saint John's energy sector.

Thank you.

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