

# straight talk

## STO:LO OFFICIAL WANTS "UNCEDED" MOTIONS

Vancouver is "setting an example" for other municipalities by looking at formally acknowledging that the city lies on the unceded traditional territory of three First Nations, according to a Sto:lo Nation official.

David Schaepe, director and senior archaeologist of the Sto:lo Research and Resource Management Centre and technical adviser for the Sto:lo Xwexwilmexw Treaty Association, told the *Straight* he hopes all municipalities in Sto:lo territory will "follow suit". The Sto:lo Nation is composed of 11 First Nations in the Fraser Valley.

"There's some significant municipalities in this area, and within them, I would say, significant holes or gaps in the recognition of the aboriginal peoples—particularly Sto:lo peoples—that historically and continually have occupied the places within those municipal boundaries," Schaepe said by phone from Chilliwack.

Vision Vancouver councillor Andrea Reimer put forward the motion recognizing that the territories of the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh were "never ceded through treaty, war, or surrender". It calls for city staff to work with First Nations representatives to develop "appropriate protocols" for city business that respect their traditions. Council is expected to vote on the motion at its meeting on Wednesday (June 25).

Reimer told the *Straight* the city heard much about the harms of colonization during the Year of Reconciliation, which ended on June 20. "This seemed the logical next step to take," Reimer said by phone.

While the Sto:lo people assert aboriginal rights and title to the area extending from Vancouver to Yale, Schaepe noted they recognize that

the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh hold the "primary relationships" in Vancouver. He called Reimer's motion a "very positive" development, especially since First Nations are "struggling" to achieve "high level" recognition from the Canadian and B.C. governments.

Schaepe said he'd like to see the governments of Abbotsford, Chilliwack, Langley, Harrison Hot Springs, Hope, and Mission acknowledge they sit on Sto:lo territory.

"There's a limited recognition to, in some cases, almost no recognition of the relationship with the aboriginal peoples within those municipal boundaries," Schaepe said, "and it's not fair and it's not healthy."

Abbotsford mayor Bruce Banman and Chilliwack mayor Sharon Gaetz were unavailable for comment.

> STEPHEN HUI

## FRACKING STUDIES SHOW HIGHER METHANE LEVELS

Two reports about methane emissions from hydraulic fracturing sites in Pennsylvania are raising questions about the environmental impacts of liquefied natural gas (LNG) in British Columbia.

The first, dated June 2014 and authored by Mary Kang of Princeton University, presents findings from abandoned wells that suggest such sites could account for four percent to 13 percent of the state's anthropogenic methane emissions.

The second, published in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* in April 2014, surveyed active hydraulic fracturing (fracking) sites and found gas plumes in the air above wells had methane levels two to three times greater than previous estimates by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

In a telephone interview, the Pembina Institute's associate regional director for B.C. told the *Straight* that

the more we learn about fracking and methane leaks the worse things look for the province's LNG sector.

"There are definitely questions as to what the actual emissions are," said Matt Horne. "Those studies out of Pennsylvania, those are all measuring things that are not picked up in [B.C.] inventories. Things like methane at drilling stages and methane from abandoned wells: we know there is methane there, but it's not included in any sort of reporting protocol."

Horne also called attention to a December 2013 B.C. government report stating that 70 percent more methane is released from fracking operations' pneumatic devices (controls responsive to pressure) than was previously acknowledged.

B.C.'s Ministry of Natural Gas Development referred questions to the Ministry of Environment, which did not make a spokesperson available for an interview.

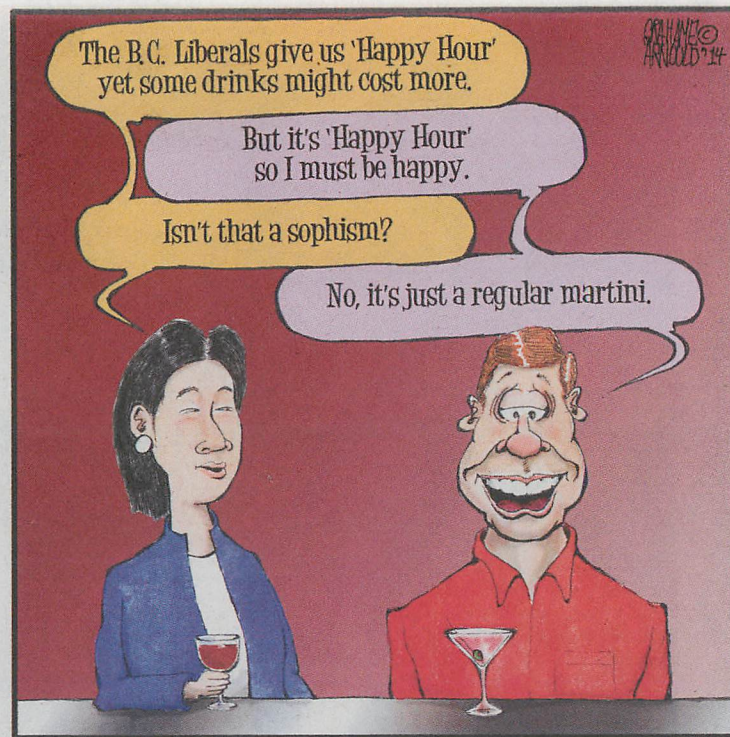
According to Marc Lee, a senior economist at the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, as much as 85 percent of B.C.'s LNG sector now relies on fracking, which he noted is more damaging to the environment than traditional LNG operations.

Lee said best-practice technologies can minimize methane leakage at fracking sites. He argued, however, that the province is not doing enough to ensure companies adopt those tools. "We only have claims about the cleanest LNG in the world," Lee said. "It's government by sound bite and press release."

> TRAVIS LUPICK

## PROJECT BRINGS DIGITAL BOOKS TO AFRICAN KIDS

A University of British Columbia professor of education is hoping to "harness local and international interest" for a project that aims to address the shortage of picture books available in African languages.



The B.C. Liberals give us 'Happy Hour' yet some drinks might cost more.

But it's 'Happy Hour' so I must be happy.

Isn't that a sophism?

No, it's just a regular martini.

Bonny Norton, research adviser for the African Storybook Project, told the *Straight* the "innovative" initiative's goal is to boost early literacy levels in Kenya, South Africa, Uganda, and other countries.

"This is one of the greatest challenges in Africa," Norton said by phone from her Vancouver home. "There are very few resources to become literate in the mother tongue."

Earlier this month, the project's website ([africanstorybook.org/](http://africanstorybook.org/)) launched with 120 different stories in 20 languages, including Lugbarati, Kiswahili, and Kikamba. All of the digital books are published in English and at least one African language and made freely available under Creative Commons licences.

According to Norton, teachers and librarians in Africa download the books to computers and project them on walls for children to read. The project's site also allows people from all over the world to read,

create, and translate books.

"It's also about ownership," Norton said. "It's not just stories that have come from England or stories that have come from the U.S. and Canada but Africans are constructing their own stories, writing their own stories, and uploading these stories that can be shared across Africa."

Norton is organizing the African Storybook Summit, which will take place on Thursday (June 26) at UBC's Digital Literacy Centre. She said the project, run by the South African Institute for Distance Education and funded by U.K.-based Comic Relief, involves several UBC students.

The professor noted that Canadians can contribute to the project by translating books into French or telling their connections in Africa about it. "People even in Canada can use that site," Norton said. "You'll be able to read stories in English and in French."

> STEPHEN HUI