

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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In solidarity with Wet'suwet'en land defenders, celebrities urge City National Bank's parent company, Royal Bank of Canada, to defund Coastal GasLink pipeline

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Unceded land of the Chumash, Tongva (Gabrieleno), and Kizh (Gabrieleno) Peoples (so-called Los Angeles, California) – Today, over 65 Hollywood celebrities, including Mark Ruffalo, Leonardo DiCaprio, Taika Waititi, Scarlett Johansson, Jane Fonda, Susan Sarandon, and Robert Downey Jr., [released a letter to City National Bank's \(CNB\) parent company, Royal Bank of Canada \(RBC\)](#), demanding the immediate withdrawal of financial support for Coastal GasLink, a 416-mile (670-kilometer) gas pipeline [slated to cut through sacred and sensitive ecosystems in Wet'suwet'en land](#), in British Columbia, Canada without consent from hereditary chiefs.

CNB, dubbed the “Bank of the Stars,” is a wholly-owned subsidiary of RBC, the lead financier of the Coastal GasLink pipeline. Since acquiring CNB in 2015, [RBC has doubled down on fossil fuel financing](#), and is the world's fifth largest fossil bank and Canada's #1 fossil fuel financier.

The letter signed by actors, artists, athletes and musicians states, “Despite claiming to be a leader in climate conscious banking, since acquiring CNB in 2015, RBC has spent over \$160 billion to become one of the world's largest and most aggressive financiers of tar sands, fossil fuel extraction, and transport.”

[Read the full letter and list of signatories here.](#)

“Our sacred headwaters, the Wedzin Kwa river, is the lifeline for our people. By financing Coastal GasLink, CNB's parent company RBC is putting us profoundly at risk,” said **Gidimt'en Checkpoint spokesperson Sleydo', Molly Wickham**. “The gas pipeline violates our hereditary title, and has led to years of RCMP violence and harassment of peaceful Indigenous land defenders, and the forced removal of Wet'suwet'en peoples from our territory. We've been crystal clear: RBC must divest from this toxic project, which threatens Wet'suwet'en land, air and water, and steamrolls Indigenous rights.”

With an estimated [CAD \\$6.6 billion](#) price tag, RBC is among top commercial banks providing the CGL project with working capital, including CAD \$275 million in project finance, a co-financed

\$6.5 billion loan, a \$40 million corporate loan, and \$200 million in co-financed working capital – while acting as financial advisor for the pipeline.

“CNB and RBC have the opportunity to stand on the right side of history, and that starts with immediately divesting from Coastal GasLink,” said **actor and activist Mark Ruffalo**. “I’m heartened not only by the power of Wet’suwet’en land defenders, but also by my community of artists rising up to demand an end to all fossil fuel finance as we live through this climate catastrophe.”

Today’s letter comes after a February 25 [landmark meeting between Wet’suwet’en Hereditary Chiefs and CNB and RBC executives](#), where the Chiefs issued formal demands. Days following that meeting, the [latest IPCC report painted a devastating picture](#) of climate impacts on Indigenous Peoples and their resilience, and [handed a stark warning to investors](#).

The February 25 meeting ended with the Chiefs showing a heartbreaking [video of the years of police violence, arrests, raids](#), and harassment which [continues to this day](#). The RBC-financed Coastal GasLink pipeline has brought a rise in police violence against Indigenous land and water defenders, with Canadian [federal police spending topping \\$21 million](#).

A new investigation recently revealed fossil fuel companies, including Coastal GasLink, [launched a steady flow of “Indigenous washing” social media ads](#), with a spike in the targeted ads around the November 2021 federal Canadian police raid.

“We refuse to allow our industry’s bank of choice to associate itself with the abuse of Indigenous Rights or to participate in accelerating the climate crisis,” said **Alex Ebert, musician and composer**. “Despite public statements, CNB’s parent company RBC is blatantly disregarding Indigenous peoples and our climate. This letter is not the beginning of this decade-long fight, or even close to the end. If CNB’s parent company doesn’t divest from its extreme fossil fuel extraction and transport operations, the ‘bank of the stars’ will be known as the ‘bank of the tars’.”

In addition to Coastal GasLink, RBC is pouring [millions into Russian oil and gas corporations](#), including one producing [steel for the pipeline](#). The pipeline has been implicated in recent pushes to divest from Russian assets, as one of the main suppliers of steel to the pipeline is Russian-oligarch controlled Evraz.

“I spoke at RBC’s shareholder meeting in 2009 – RBC is not new to these tactics. They have been willfully financing destruction, including in my community through the tar sands, the dirtiest fossil fuel in the world,” said **Melina Laboucan-Massimo, Senior Director, Indigenous Climate Action**. “Bankrolling Coastal GasLink is just the latest example of RBC covering up their role in violating Indigenous rights, not upholding free, prior and informed consent as outlined in UNDRIP, and in exacerbating the climate crisis. In my community, we can’t drink our water because of RBC’s investments. We want to make sure Wet’suwet’en communities still can.”

Frontline organizers, celebrities, and communities will host an [online press conference on Wednesday, March 16 at 10amPT / 1pmET](#), and are gearing up to take action in Los Angeles this Friday, March 18, and across North America around [RBC's annual shareholder meeting on April 7](#), expected to take place both virtually and in-person in Toronto.

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NOTES TO EDITOR:

Celebrities and Hereditary Chiefs are available for interviews.

To view this full release with all signatories online, visit: nomoredirtybanks.com

For more information, visit: yintahaccess.com