

FAQ Alton Natural Gas Storage Facility Project

January 2016

What is the Alton project about?

During this phase of the project (approx. 4.5 years) the company, Alton Natural Gas Storage LP, will build three underground salt caverns to store natural gas so it can be used for energy supply. A second phase of the project, the gas pipeline installation, will require separate reviews and approvals.

Does a project like this make sense for Nova Scotia?

Natural gas is an important source of lower-carbon energy, providing heat and power to many Nova Scotia homes, businesses and public buildings. This project has the potential to help natural gas customers save \$17 million each year and ensure there is enough gas to meet customer needs when energy demands are highest. Government will continue to monitor the project to ensure it operates in a safe and environmentally responsible way.

Is this project safe for the community?

The proposed storage facility will be built to strict national standards (CSA Z-341) and provincial regulations. In 2013, this project received an approval to construct the storage reservoir from the regulator – the Utilities and Review Board. This process included a review of the company's engineering and construction plans by a third-party expert, referred to as the "certifying authority." The certifying authority will oversee the construction to ensure it adheres to their approved plans. Once operational, the facility will be monitored 24-7 and will have stringent safety protocols in place.

Why are people concerned about this project and the Shubenacadie River?

The project will use salt water from the Shubenacadie River to carve out the underground salt caverns, then return the salt water mixture back to the river. Some people, including nearby Mi'kmaq communities, have expressed concerns that this process could impact the river and fish.

What is government doing to protect the environment?

An Environmental Assessment was completed for this phase of the project in 2007. In response to concerns raised by the Mi'kmaq of Nova Scotia, an additional science review was undertaken which looked at information about the river collected since 2007 and how the design and operations of the project could impact the river.

What are the results of the review?

The company's Monitoring Plan now better addresses concerns raised by the Mi'kmaq. It requires that operations be shut down each year during the peak spawning period for Striped Bass for 24 days to minimize potential impacts to Striped Bass eggs. Monitoring and testing will be done more frequently. The company has committed to sharing its results. Based on this work, the project is not expected to have any significant impacts on the river and fish that live there.

Tell us more about the Aboriginal consultation process.

In 2014, the Assembly of N.S. Mi'kmaq Chiefs and Sipekne'katik Band raised concerns about the project when work started on the site after several years of being dormant. As a result of these concerns, the project was halted to allow further consultation between the province and the Assembly and with the Sipekne'katik Band. After months of meaningful consultation, including an independent science review led by the Assembly, the province and Alton were able to incorporate important changes into the way the project would operate and be regulated.

What consultation has taken place with the broader community?

The proponent is responsible for public engagement on its project. Alton has set up a project website, held public information sessions, met with community leaders and residents, and provided tours of the project site.

What permits were approved and is that all the company needs to complete the project?

Government is issuing the following permits for this phase of the project in January 2016:

- ▶ the Industrial Approval to operate the brine storage pond from the Department of Environment;
- ▶ the lease of submerged Crown land to complete the discharge channel from the Department of Natural Resources; and
- ▶ an agreement to construct a dyke on Crown lands from the Department of Agriculture.

With these approvals, the company can move ahead with constructing the storage caverns. The project will continue to be monitored and appropriate permit approvals will still be required along the way.

How can I learn more about this project?

Anyone interested in knowing more about this project can get more information from the proponent, Alton Natural Gas Storage LP at <http://altonnaturalgasstorage.ca/> .

Other information is also available at:

<http://mikmaqrighths.com/consultation/alton-gas-storage-project/>

http://mikmaqrighths.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/KMKNO-Bulletin_Alton-Gas_January2016.pdf .