

BUSINESS IN THE NEWS ASSIGNMENT COMM 390, BUSINESS WRITING

PIPELINE POLITICS: OIL, ETHICS & CSR

In this assignment you will consider the role of ethics and corporate social responsibility in business, as illustrated by a company currently in the news: Enbridge.

SCENARIO

You are interning at a new Sauder initiative, the Social Responsibility Project (SRP), a research unit that acts as a bridge between corporations, academia and society. By focusing on corporate social responsibility and ethical decision-making, the SRP provides a forum for Sauder's professors to provide solutions to real world problems. A stakeholder group involved in the controversial Northern Gateway project has contacted the SRP and requested help advancing its position. For the purposes of this assignment, you have the freedom to choose any specific stakeholder you like. It could be towns along the pipeline route, a special interest group, an environmental group, an energy lobby group (either for or against the project), aboriginal communities, Enbridge itself, or any other stakeholder you've discovered in your reading. Just choose an organization you identify with - either for or against the pipeline - because you will have to argue their point of view.

TASK

This assignment consists of two parts: a short briefing report addressed to your COMM 390 instructor, Social Responsibility Project Director, Sauder School of Business; and a persuasive letter to the federal government written for your stakeholder.

PART 1: Briefing Report (Length, 500 words)

Write a brief overview of what's happening with the Northern Gateway pipeline. Identify the key stakeholders (government, business and private) and briefly discuss the positions they have taken on the Northern Gateway pipeline. Provide a succinct and insightful analysis of the current situation. This memo will be used as a background document to brief the other SRP researchers working on the project.

PART 2: Position Statement (Length, 1,500 words)

Assume you are representing your chosen stakeholder. Write a position statement in letter form that your group will forward to the federal government. (National Energy Board, Joint Review Panel – Enbridge Northern Gateway Project, 444 Seventh Avenue SW, Calgary, Alberta, T2P 0X8). The goal is to produce a well-researched document that will help your client argue its position for or against the pipeline. Use the first person.

ISSUES TO REFLECT UPON

Don't just write an essay about the pipeline, create a persuasive argument:

- Ask yourself whether it is legally, ethically (right vs. wrong), economically and socially responsible to build this pipeline. Consider the political implications too, because it's possible that Enbridge could receive approval to construct the pipeline but fail to win over public opinion, making the project unbuildable.

- Assess your stakeholder's role in the Enbridge controversy and why this stakeholder group has taken the stance it has.
- Analyze Enbridge's corporate social responsibility policies (available on the company's website). Compare its CSR goals with its CSR record.
- Evaluate Enbridge's claim that it is an ethical and proactive company with a social conscience. Is this claim credible?
- Propose tangible ways to help your stakeholder group get what it wants. For example, if you've chosen Enbridge as your client, suggest ways that the company could appease key opponents and win over both the public and the different layers of government. Could Enbridge make concessions that would make the pipeline more acceptable to opponents? Or, if you've chosen a pipeline opponent, propose strategies your group could use to try and block the project.

VIDEOS

Watch the following videos to further understand the Northern Gateway project. These short films strive to advance very particular points of view. They are informative, but not necessarily impartial so be willing to question any biases you detect.

1. *BC's Huge Gamble*, made by BC filmmaker Corey Ogilvie, a UBC alumni (BA):
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UgvY6zBc3q4>

2. Enbridge's video on the Northern Gateway:
<http://www.northerngateway.ca/project-details/route-video/>

3. Video by opponents of the pipeline:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=U3vxhnan_ZA

4. *Enbridge Centre for Corporate Sustainability*:
<http://csr.enbridge.com/index.php/videos>

You are free to organize your documents however you want as long as they cover the above areas. You should follow the rules of good business writing as laid out in the grading rubric, the textbook and as discussed in the classroom. Include a title page, citations, and a bibliography containing at least five different sources. Use the APA formatting style for citations.

LENGTH: 2,000 words

SUBMISSION:

Submit your final version to the Turnitin dropbox before the due date. Keep your outline, drafts, notes and other documentation until the course is completed.