

August 17th, 2015

NEB letter of comment by Karen Ruckman

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed Trans Mountain expansion. I am opposed to the project and will focus my discussion on five topics.

Before I begin, I will point out that the repeated changing of the due date for commenters (right up until very recently from September 3rd to August 18th!), the incorrect date listed on the NEB website (the date stated beside the link to submit this letter today says that it is due on September 3rd!), and the lack of time between the publication of the draft conditions and the due date have made this task difficult at best.

1. Incorrect location of Burnaby and Westridge terminals based on density of population.

The fact that the terminals exist in these locations does not justify their expansion. They were situated in the current locations in 1953 in part due to the lack of human density at the time. Things have changed. Burnaby is the third largest city in B.C. and the areas near the two terminals are filled with dense population, infrastructure, a university (whose two access routes are directly affected by the Burnaby terminal) and schools. The Forest Grove and Westridge Elementary Schools are both located within meters of existing terminals and pipelines. No amount of conditions related to emergency response will save those people in the event of a catastrophic event such as a fire at the Burnaby terminal. The two terminals would be better situated in less population dense areas, especially in the event of an earthquake.

We bought our house in lower Westridge in 2005, knowing of the Westridge Terminal's location. We were not happy with the proximity but trusted that there was little risk based on history. However, in July 2007, there was a rupture 1.5 blocks from our home of over 200,000 litres of heavy crude. I was 34 weeks pregnant at the time. The environmental, economic, psychological and social impact was enormous. We still do not know the full impact of the fumes and direct contact with the oil on our health or the health of my soon-to-be 8 year old. Trans Mountain may claim that the rupture was not their fault but fault in this case is irrelevant. In a densely populated area, there are many actors and activities which can affect Trans Mountain's best laid plans and are out of their control. I understand that the conditions that are imposed on these types of projects are intended to avoid those events, however, it is obvious that the risk and impact of these events would be significantly reduced in less populated areas.

2. Incorrect location of Burnaby and Westridge terminals based on updated knowledge.

There is no justification for expanding an activity just because it is already in operation. The knowledge used to situate the original locations in 1953 is archaic and expanding an activity simply because it is already in operation is logistically faulty. We know so much more today about environmental and human risk than we did back then. The terminals, the pipelines and the marine routes should not be located in or through densely populated areas. If we used the same logic to expand activities in 2015 that we, as a society, condoned in 1953, we would still have residential schools¹, physicians telling us to feed our infants with formula² and racial segregation in schools³. We know now that those activities were wrong on many levels. We also know that locating oil transportation facilities next to dense populations and along precarious marine routes is also wrong. We should not expand an activity that was originally condoned based on incomplete information (at the time).

3. Lack of conditions related to marine risks, in particular for orcas.

I do not see any conditions directly related to conserving the endangered local orca population. There are conditions related to cariboo, spotted owl and grizzly bear habitats but nothing related to the southern resident orca species which the current amount of tanker traffic already affects. Not only is there significant risk of an oil spill on the orca habitat but they would not be able to detect a spill⁴ and there would be a significant increase in the risk of direct contact by tankers. It is well documented that the sound of boat traffic negatively affects their ability to communicate with each other⁵. This species is on an upwards trajectory⁶ but is far from secure. The expansion of the Trans Mountain pipeline will put them at further unnecessary risk.

4. Condition related to the shutdown of existing pipeline post-expansion.

If the project is to be approved, Trans Mountain should be forced to shut down the existing pipeline which now runs between Burnaby terminal and Westridge terminal. Condition #28 discusses the NPS 24 delivery pipeline: I assume this is the same pipeline I am referring to. However, all this condition states is that Trans Mountain must decide whether it wants to relocate the pipeline. This is not strong enough. Trans Mountain should be forced to close the existing pipeline if the project is approved to go through the mountain. There is absolutely no justification for allowing them the option of retaining both pathways. I live in lower Westridge

¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Canadian_Indian_residential_school_system

² <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2684040/>

³ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brown_v._Board_of_Education

⁴ <http://response.restoration.noaa.gov/oil-and-chemical-spills/oil-spills/resources/oil-spill-response-and-killer-whales.html>

⁵ <http://seattlemag.com/article/oil-and-puget-sound-orcas-can-they-survive-spill>

⁶ <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/orca-calf-raises-hopes-of-baby-boom-in-endangered-population-1.3016834>

and our block is hemmed in on one side by the pipeline currently carrying heavy crude (along Inlet Drive) and on the other by a high pressure jet fuel pipeline (along Cliff Avenue). In the event of an earthquake, I currently do not have an evacuation path for my family. Once we exit our house, there is no safe direction to go. This is not acceptable.

5. Lack of conditions related to parked tankers waiting for fill ups at the Westridge terminal.

The noise coming from parked tankers waiting in the Burrard inlets is already loud for residents and people enjoying the Barnet Marine Park. The visuals of seeing a gigantic tanker meters away from the shore while strolling along the trail at the Barnet Marine Park is shocking, infuriating and unnecessary. The fumes and particulate matter coming off these tankers is dangerous for our health. I see conditions related to the noise and fumes coming from the Westridge terminal but I do not see any conditions related to the noise, fumes and location of tankers waiting for fill up. The tankers should not be able to drift or turn around anywhere near the park. Perhaps the tankers are not even currently allowed to move within meters of the park but the reality is that they do. The fact that Trans Mountain cannot fully control the activities, fumes or noise of third party tankers is another reason why the location of the terminal is incorrect.