

Background: Roberts Bank Terminal 2 opposition demands answers from governments on expansion: Environmentalists, communities, and unions stand together

- On April 20, the federal government approved the Port of Vancouver's expansion project known as Roberts Bank Terminal 2 (RBT2). It involves the construction of a three-berth container terminal, expected to increase container shipments by 50 per cent and extend further into the Fraser River Estuary.
- The development of RBT2 poses significant risks to the Fraser River Estuary, which is recognized as one of Canada's most important biodiversity hotspots. Entire wildlife species face increased risks, with some facing potential extinction as a result of the project's ecological impacts.
- The fate of the project now rests with the B.C. government, which needs to authorize its construction within the province. A rejection by the B.C. government would mark the end for RBT2.

Ineffectiveness of B.C.'s Environmental Assessment Report:

- The guiding document for the project, B.C.'s Environmental Assessment Report, fails to adequately evaluate the true destructive impacts of the mega project on B.C. and the Salish Sea region. It disregards and ignores ecological effects on endangered southern resident killer whales, wild Pacific salmon, migratory birds, and the vital Fraser River Estuary.
- The report suggests only 17 additional conditions for the project, which do little to limit its environmental damage or address the substantial gaps left by the 370 federal-approved conditions.
- The B.C. government offers no protection measures for harm caused to endangered chinook salmon, barn owls, southern resident killer whales and Dungeness crab.
- The report overlooks the project's contribution to job losses in the province through unsustainable levels of automation in the sector.
- It fails to acknowledge that B.C. already has sufficient container terminal capacity with existing expansions in the inner harbor and planned expansions at Prince Rupert, which are privately funded and involve minimal environmental degradation at significantly lower costs.
- The report neglects to consider the implications of automating work, including job losses, the risk of fire from the battery storage facility on-site, and the significant energy requirements of automation.

Labour Considerations:

- The construction of RBT2 will result in a reduction of family-supporting jobs as existing terminals will be forced to automate to compete with the fully automated RBT2.

- Robin Sylvestre and the Vancouver Fraser Port Authority (VFPA) are seen as responsible for this job loss, with the VFPA prioritizing corporate interests over the working class and cities.
- RBT2 is projected to have negative effects on jobs and the environment in Delta and throughout the province. Environmental groups have highlighted the disastrous impact of the VFPA's proposed changes on the working class and local wildlife.
- The [ILWU Canada Prism report](#) on automated terminals and the economic damage they can cause provides further insights into the potential consequences of RBT2.

Environmental Considerations:

- The proposed project is situated in the Fraser River Estuary, the largest key biodiversity area in B.C., categorized as globally important, a [Ramsar Site](#) and a vital ecosystem for various marine mammals, shorebirds, salmon and over 100 at-risk species.
- An independent review panel appointed by the federal government in 2020 concluded that RBT2 would undoubtedly cause irreversible and lasting adverse ecological effects, particularly on critically endangered southern resident killer whales, at-risk wild Pacific salmon and migratory and at-risk bird populations.
- Negative effects on endangered and at-risk species include the destruction and modification of highly biodiverse areas in the Fraser River Estuary, reduction of critical habitat for southern resident killer whales, and diminished functional habitat for juvenile salmon.
- The project's development would impact migratory bird populations by affecting the quality and quantity of essential food sources such as biofilm, thereby disrupting the entire food web.