

OIL TANKER

BAN



Let's Keep the WEST COAST OIL SPILL FREE

Tar Sands Oil Shipments Threaten Canada's West Coast and Beyond



Editorial by Rex Weyler
Journalist, working with No Tanks, Smart Change, and B.C. Citizens for Public Power

On the west coast of Canada, we live in one of the most naturally beautiful regions on Earth, blessed with a productive marine environment, rich forests, and citizens who have fought for generations to preserve our coastal beauty and abundance.

All this is now at risk as Vancouver Harbour is being turned into the tar sands oil port.

In 2007 without any discussion or visible process, Canada began shipping tar sands crude oil through Vancouver Harbour. Today, two oil tankers per week load up to 700,000 barrels of oil at Kinder-Morgan's Westridge Terminal in Burrard Inlet, pass under the Second Narrows and Lions Gate bridges, traverse the harbour, cut through the Strait of Georgia, and leave through Juan de Fuca Strait. For the oil companies, this is just the beginning: plans are underway to expand this capacity to ten tankers per week.

Crude Awakenings

The oil industry has claimed that this is nothing new, that we've shipped oil along our coast for decades, but this is a deception. We have indeed shipped refined gasoline products to communities along our coast, but there is a big difference between a gasoline barge to Squamish and massive crude oil tankers destined for refineries in California and China.

The quantities shipped to communities along the coast are small, whereas oil tankers carry up to 700,000 barrels of heavy crude oil. By comparison, the Exxon Valdez spilled 266,000 barrels. Spilled gasoline is not good for the marine environment, but refined gasoline floats and evaporates. Crude oil sinks, invades the entire marine ecosystem, and sits in the

intertidal soil for decades. These shipments of raw bitumen crude oil threaten our marine environment, our coastal economy, and our reputation as a "green" city.

We only have to look at the Exxon Valdez disaster in Prince William Sound, the BP spill that ravaged the Gulf of Mexico, or recent disasters in China, South Korea, Spain, and Norway to know that oil spills are common and devastating.

We want to remain a green, ecologically aware, productive coastal community. Join us in taking a stand for a ban on oil tankers on Canada's west coast.

Photos top (clockwise)
Oil tanker passing through Second Narrows Memorial bridge, Vancouver, Starfish near Stanley Park, Vancouver (Paul Colangelo), Great blue heron (Natasha Meens), View of the Salish Sea (Paul Colangelo)
Photos Bottom
Oil spill in China (Associated Press), Marine life (Chris Cheadle/All Canada Photos)



Oil & water don't mix

Crude oil is a thick, black sludge that contains sulfur, paraffins, asphaltics, naphthene, benzenes, and other compounds that have toxic effects on plants and animals. Some impacts from oil spills in a marine ecosystem include:

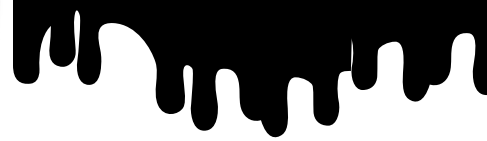
Persistence: evidence from the Ixtoc spill in the Gulf of Mexico and the Amoco Cadiz spill in France show that oil remains in the substrate after 30 years and will likely persist for a century with impacts on flora and fauna.

Death: Fish, birds, mammals, reptiles, shellfish, and plants are suffocated and poisoned. The Ixtoc spill in 1980 killed 50-80% of the bottom dwelling animals along some shorelines.

Disease: Oil causes cancer, liver decay, tumors, ulcers, respiratory failure, narcosis, and other diseases in animals and humans.

Erosion: Oil kills and stunts wetlands grasses and other plants, causing root structures to decay and soil to erode. This causes food chain disruption following the loss of photoplankton, shellfish, fish, and birds.

Breeding habitats destroyed: The loss of plants and eroded soil destroy wetland nurseries for birds, fish, and other animals.



STOP Climate Profiteering

Scientists have documented that the overall temperature of our planet is rising rapidly, largely because too much carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases are being released from burning fossil fuels such as oil and coal. Carbon in the atmosphere traps heat on the planet like a warm blanket, destabilizing the planet's delicately balanced climate system. The effects of climate change are already being felt as extreme weather events and natural disasters are happening at an alarming rate all over the world.

As global temperatures continue to hit record highs, it is simply unacceptable to profit from burning more of the dirty fossil fuels that threaten our

future. Canada was recently voted Fossil of the Year by international environmental groups, largely because of the continued expansion of the tar sands to feed oil company profits. The tar sands are the fastest-growing source of greenhouse gas emissions in Canada, and contribute to increasing emissions regardless of where the oil is burned.

Canada is already the largest source of oil for the United States and increasing amounts of oil are flowing from tar sands to supply China's growing needs. As China and the US are the two biggest greenhouse gas polluters, stopping the expansion of the tar sands is doubly important in the fight against global warming.

"It Can't Happen Here"

The oil industry tells us that they use modern double-hull tankers and skilled pilots, and that an oil spill in Burrard Inlet or Georgia Strait is unlikely.

However, North Vancouver oceanographer Peter Baker points out that Port Metro Vancouver has changed its rules to allow larger tankers, carrying 700,000 barrels of oil, to travel through Second Narrows with less than 1.5 meter clearance between ocean floor and ship's keel at high tide.

To avoid grounding, the tankers must remain precisely in mid-channel through the bending passage, only seconds away from grounding on the shallows. Once grounded in an ebbing tide, a tanker could easily break apart under its own weight and the force of the strong currents. Most large oil spills are the result of structural failures, something that rust-prone double hulls may make more likely.¹

Accidents Happen Economics of an Oil Spill

Captain Stephen Brown of the B.C. Chamber of Shipping, representing Port Metro Vancouver, told Vancouver City Council in July, "We have yet to have a pollution incident from a double hull tanker." Captain Brown was wrong. For example, in January 2010, in Port Arthur, Texas, the double-hulled tanker Eagle Otome collided with a barge, spilling 11,000 barrels of oil. According to the US Coast Guard, a double bottom would not have prevented the Exxon Valdez disaster and might have only reduced the amount of oil that leaked by 25%.²

During a storm on December 2007, near Mallipo Beach, South Korea, a barge broke loose and hit the Hebei Spirit tanker, spilling 78,000 barrels of oil. The

spill devastated popular beaches, killed migratory birds and sea mammals, and contaminated sea farms, costing the region billions of dollars.

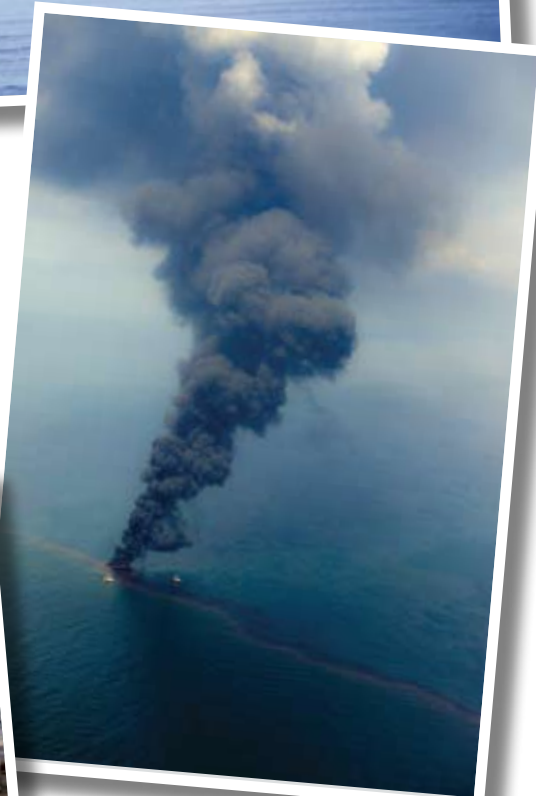
British Columbia harbour pilots are among the best in the world, but accidents happen. In 2009, two cargo ships grounded on Canada's Pacific coast in just three months.³ If we allow larger and larger quantities of oil to be exported, a major spill is almost inevitable.

The financial damage from a large spill in this region would be \$10-50 billion, devastating our fishing, tourism, shipping, conventions, and seaside businesses.⁴

In the Gulf of Mexico, following the BP oil spill, thousands of businesses have closed and others are suffering. Economist Sean Snaith, from the Institute for Economic Competitiveness

in Florida, estimates that Florida alone could lose 195,000 jobs and \$11 billion due to the spill.⁵ Credit Suisse has estimated total BP costs at \$37 billion, just for clean up and liability claims.

Photos (left to right)
Oil cleanup in Tofino, 1982 (Wilderness Committee files),
Oil-spill emergency response team practicing in Vancouver (Bill Gannon), Oil tanker (Peter Baker), Grizzly bear (Tim Irvin), Sea star (Mark Degner), Sockeye salmon (Wayne Lynch), Overlooking the Salish Sea (Paul Colangelo)

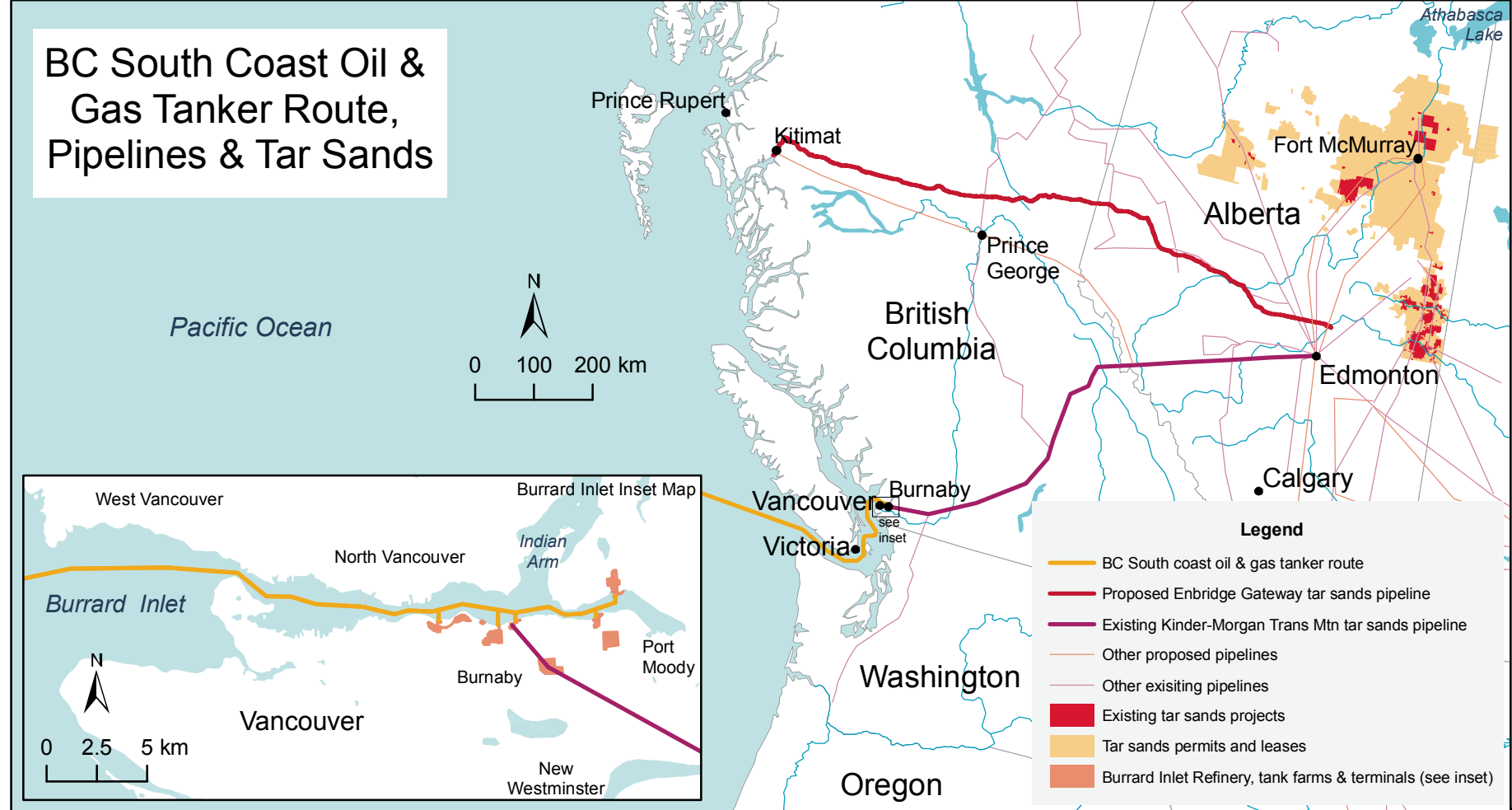


Killer whale (Chris Cheadle/All Canada Photos), Oil tanker on fire (Kris Krug), Bird soaked in oil (Creative Commons image by marinephotobank)



"We have less than 10 years to halt the global rise in greenhouse gas emissions if we are to avoid catastrophic consequences for people and the planet. It is, simply, the greatest collective challenge we face as a human family."
—Ban Ki-Moon, Secretary-General of the United Nations

BC South Coast Oil & Gas Tanker Route, Pipelines & Tar Sands



Two Tar Sands Pipelines Threaten Rivers and Coast

Two pipeline proposals threaten to further expand oil extraction and export in Western Canada. One is the proposed new Enbridge Gateway pipeline that would move crude oil from the tar sands across BC to tankers in Kitimat. This would put over 1,000 salmon bearing streams and rivers at risk and disrupt the traditional lifestyle of many First Nations. It would also mean tankers leaving through BC's treacherous northern inlets. A coalition of environmentalists and First Nations from Alberta to the coast is working hard to stop the Gateway Pipeline.

For more information visit pipeupagainstenbridge.ca

The second is the Trans Mountain Expansion (TMX) proposal by Kinder-Morgan to twin their existing pipeline to Burrard Inlet and the US and add a branch pipeline from Valemont to Kitimat as shown on the map.⁶ This proposal would more than triple the flow of Tar Sands oil to tankers on the coast, while endangering numerous salmon streams and rivers. Both of these proposed pipelines must be stopped.

"Our region gains almost nothing from these shipments, and we risk everything, our economy and our environment. The Gulf of Mexico disaster demonstrates that the oil industry is tragically unreliable."
—Bill Gannon, CMA, Certified Management Accountant, former Greenpeace accountant, and director of No Tanks.

Species at Risk

Canada's west coast is home to an amazing array of birds and marine life including the iconic killer whale. Unfortunately the endangered southern resident population is small and under threat from toxins, acoustic disturbances and a diminished food supply.

Even a moderate sized spill of toxic tar sands oil could wipe out the southern resident population. The impact on other threatened species, such as the sea otter and marbled murrelet could also be disastrous.

"I've been fishing in BC since 1973. If we get an oil spill anywhere in these waters, it would wipe out every fishery we have, shellfish, salmon, herring, and the plankton that they feed on. An oil spill would move with the wind and tides and devastate the intertidal zones."
—Ron Fowler, B.C. fisherman, Pacific Salmon Commissioner and Director of the Area-F Trollers Association.

DEMAND



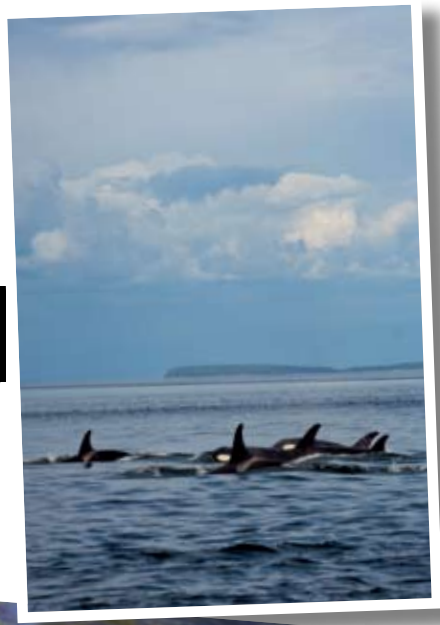
a TANKER BAN on Canada's West Coast

You can help make Canada's west coast oil tanker free. At stake is our Pacific coast, the livelihoods of thousands of Canadians who depend on these waters and the ecological integrity of our marine environment. Every one of these tankers that is allowed to carry crude oil through the Burrard Inlet or the dangerous northern inlets is a potential disaster.

A tanker ban is about more than protecting Canada's Pacific coast. A west coast tanker ban could be the turning point away from climate chaos, as it would send a strong signal to both the USA and China that the age of cheap dirty oil is over. All over the world people are coming together to call for change, for the sake of global climate stability. Supporting a tanker ban is one of the most strategic ways Canadians can

contribute to this movement.

The Wilderness Committee urges all citizens to **stand up** and **protect** Canada's wild Pacific coast from the danger posed by tar sands oil tankers. These developments can be stopped if we act now.



Photos this page
Killer whale and sea otter (Chris Cheadle/All Canada Photos)

TAKE ACTION

on oil tankers

Please take a moment to **send a letter** to the government of Canada, and tell them what you think about banning oil tankers from Canada's west coast.

Stephen Harper
Prime Minister

Michael Ignatieff
Leader of the Official Opposition

by mail
80 Wellington Street
Ottawa, ON, K1A 0A2

by e-mail
tankers@writewild.ca

info@wildernesscommittee.org • 1-800-661-WILD (9453)

Yes! I want to support
No Tanks!

Stop crude oil tankers and save our
marine shorelines

Enclosed is: \$25 \$50 \$100 Other \$ _____

NAME _____ PHONE _____
ADDRESS _____ CITY _____
PROV _____ POSTAL CODE _____ EMAIL _____

No Tanks is a citizen's coalition dedicated to stopping crude oil tankers on Canada's coast.

@ contact us
notanks.org
info@notanks.org

✂ clip
And return to:
No Tanks
2105-1331 Alberni Street
Vancouver, BC V6E 4S1

Yes! I want to help stop oil
tankers on Canada's
west coast.

Enclosed is: \$25 \$50 \$100 Other \$ _____
Fed. reg. charity #11929-3009-RR0001

I want to become a member! Enclosed is my annual fee for a:

\$52 Family Membership \$35 Individual Membership

NAME _____ PHONE _____
ADDRESS _____ CITY _____
PROV _____ POSTAL CODE _____ EMAIL _____

The Wilderness Committee is Canada's largest membership-based wilderness preservation organization.

☎ call
In the Lower Mainland
call (604) 683-8220;
In Canada call toll-free
1-800-661-9453

✂ clip
And return to the:
Wilderness Committee
P.O. Box 2205, Stn Terminal
Vancouver, BC V6B 3W2

References

- Oil & water don't mix**
- ▶ Dr. Jeffrey W. Short, U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.
 - ▶ "Still Toxic After All These Years," Christopher Reddy, Marine Chemistry, Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution.
 - ▶ C. Michael Hogan (2008), "Magellanic Penguin", GlobalTwitcher.com, ed. N. Stromberg.
 - ▶ "Oil Pollution and Seabird Populations," Dunnet, G., et. al. (1982), Royal Society of London. B 297(1087): 413-427
 - ▶ "Untold Seabird Mortality due to Marine Oil Pollution," Elements Environmental Magazine; www.elements.nb.ca
 - ▶ "The Corrosive Legacy of Oil Spills," NY Times, July 18, 2010.
 - ▶ "Oil spill impact on the Ocean" waterencyclopedia.com

Citations

- Economics of an oil spill**
- ¹ Jack Devanney (2006): The Tankship Tromeedy: The Impending Disasters in Tankers. www.c4tx.org/ctx/pub/tromeedy2.pdf
 - ² http://www.adn.com
 - ³ http://www.vancourier.com/news/Averting+disaster/3313799/story.html
 - ^{4,5} (June 8, 2010) Florida's Oil Spill Nightmare: 195,000 Jobs, \$10.9 Billion Lost. www.iec.ucf.edu
- Two tar sands pipelines threaten rivers and coast**
- ⁶ Kinder-Morgan (2008): TRANS MOUNTAIN EXPANSION (TMX) PROPOSAL (brochure) www.kindermorgan.com/business/canada/tmx_documentation/brochure_single_page.pdf

Credits

Writing and Editing: Rex Weyler, Ben West, Sven Biggs and Bill Gannon.
Design: Sue Fox, Gil Aguilar.
Mapping: Geoff Senichenko.
Photos: As noted.

Wilderness Committee, Vol. 29, No 7, 2010. Canadian Mail Product Sales Agreement No. 0900567. Posted in Vancouver for free distribution. Printed in Canada on recycled newsprint with vegetable-based inks. **Press Run 45,000** © Wilderness Committee 2010. All rights reserved. Written material may be used without permission when credit is given.

Co-published by

Wilderness Committee — National Office
P.O. Box 2205, Station Terminal
Vancouver, BC V6B 3W2
T: 604-683-8220 F: 604-683-8229
wildernesscommittee.org

No Tanks!
2105-1331 Alberni Street
Vancouver, BC V6E 4S1
notanks.org

