

Media Release
May 6, 2009

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Crude Oil in Burrard Inlet Risk Assessment May 2009

I am Bill Gannon, a Certified Management Accountant, with an office overlooking Coal Harbour. I noticed an oil tanker passing by one morning, and investigated further. I confirmed with Kinder Morgan, the owners of the Westbridge Terminal in Burnaby, that Alberta crude oil is being pumped from their pipeline into crude oil tankers for shipment to China. The tankers, each with a capacity of 500,000 barrels, or 21 million gallons, of crude oil, leave Burnaby about once per week, around Stanley Park on their way to the Pacific Ocean.

During a two year investigation, I wrote many letters – to my MP Hedy Fry, to Department of Transport Officials, The Library of Parliament, and others – trying to discover who is responsible for allowing crude oil shipments through BC waters. I also wanted to know who would handle emergency response in the event of an oil spill. The surprising conclusion: **No one appears to be responsible and we are unprepared to handle a major oil spill.**

I believe the only way to mitigate the risk of a crude oil spill ruining our Vancouver beaches and marine environment is to ban the shipment of crude oil in Burrard Inlet. I'm all for tankers and the Port of Vancouver, but the marine shipment of crude oil has proved itself to be most destructive. I know that is a complicated issue and a huge problem. But ignoring the risk will not make it go away. This issue must be brought to the attention of Vancouverites, now at election time, not after the spill. Most people I have talked to are shocked to know that crude oil is being shipped through Burrard Inlet. Do we want to risk our beaches, pleasure boating, tourism, fishing, wildlife and our health for a 1.2% increase in the value of goods shipped from the Port of Vancouver?

Last evening, I delivered a summary of my findings in a 33 page report entitled ***Crude Oil in Burrard Inlet Risk Assessment May 2009*** to Vancouver Mayor Gregor Robertson, with copies to Dr. Hedy Fry, MP Vancouver Centre and Spencer Herbert, MLA Vancouver-West End. To each of them I have asked the question “**Are you in favour of legislation to ban the shipment of crude oil in Burrard Inlet?**”

Today, I am expanding the circulation of my report to include all Mayors and MLA candidates in ridings bordering the crude oil tanker route informing them of the risks and asking them the same question. Then, I'll be posting it to my website <http://www.bcwaters.org>.

The December, 2007 oil spill tragedy in the South Korean Harbour of Mallipo resulted in 2.7 million gallons of crude oil spilling into the sea and washing ashore on local beaches. I include this example because it happened, despite double hulls and safety measures, as a result of something as minor as a cable malfunction that caused a barge to slam into a crude oil tanker. That could happen here. It is not a matter of 'if' but 'when.' I've seen the clean-up crews practicing in the harbour. I assure you, we are not remotely prepared for a Mallipo Bay type incident, which will devastate our marine environment.

I am hoping that you will bring the contents of my report to the attention of your readers. It is only through public awareness that we can save our Vancouver beaches from crude oil spills.

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See attached:

1. Letter to Mayor Gregor Robertson
2. United Nations Situation Report – Hebei Spirit Oil Spill
3. Statistics Canada report –logistics of shipping Alberta oil through the Port of Vancouver
4. Oil Spill History
5. Correspondence History –Who decides?
6. Preparedness – a synopsis of the report *Major Marine Vessel Casualty Risk and Preparedness in British Columbia*
7. Photos of Mallipo Harbour, South Korea spill cleanup and Barnet Marine Park, Burnaby, British Columbia practicing for cleanup.
8. Dirty Little Secret – by Don Whitely, BC Business April, 2009

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