

## President, Nigel Peck's Message:

**From:** NV President <[president@naturevancouver.ca](mailto:president@naturevancouver.ca)>

**Subject:** Reject Roberts Bank Terminal Two Expansion Proposal

**Date:** April 4, 2022 at 10:28:33 AM PDT

**To:** Steven Guilbeaut <[Steven.Guilbeault@parl.gc.ca](mailto:Steven.Guilbeault@parl.gc.ca)>, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau <[justin.trudeau@parl.gc.ca](mailto:justin.trudeau@parl.gc.ca)>, Joyce Murray <[joyce.murray@parl.gc.ca](mailto:joyce.murray@parl.gc.ca)>, Johnathan Wilkinson <[johnathan.wilkinson@parl.gc.ca](mailto:johnathan.wilkinson@parl.gc.ca)>, Carla Qualtrough <[carla.qualtrough@parl.gc.ca](mailto:carla.qualtrough@parl.gc.ca)>, John Horgan <[premier@gov.bc.ca](mailto:premier@gov.bc.ca)>

**Cc:** NV Board <[board@naturevancouver.ca](mailto:board@naturevancouver.ca)>

Dear Minister Steven Guilbeaut, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, Minister Joyce Murray, Minister Johnathan Wilkinson, Minister Carla Qualtrough, Jenny Kwan

I am writing as the President of Nature Vancouver to urge you to not approve the proposed Roberts Bank Terminal 2 (RBT2) proposed expansion.

Nature Vancouver (NV) is a natural history society formed in 1918, 104 years ago, and has close to a thousand members. NV represents a naturalist community with a focus on the well-being and conservation of nature, as the enjoyment of nature, and fostering public interest and nature education in both our local and the wider environment.

We are concerned that the Roberts Bank Terminal 2 proposal will irrevocably damage the environment. The proposed port expansion will bury 177 hectares of highly productive estuarine habitat and will remove the depth of its water column during higher tides. This would be a huge loss to critical fish and marine habitat, such as Chinook Salmon and several other fish species, not to mention the Southern Resident Killer Whales. It puts at extreme risk wildlife habitat; in particular the biofilm mud flats essential for migrating shorebirds such as hundreds of thousands of Western Sandpipers, for the largest Canadian overwintering waterfowl congregation, and for other bird species including the resident Great Blue Heron.

Such major losses cannot be compensated and the mitigation proposed will not be adequate. The Fraser River Estuary is globally significant; it is considered one of the most Important Bird and Biodiversity Area in Canada. Finally, the cumulative impacts of shipping throughout the Fraser Estuary and the Salish Sea have not been addressed.

Nature Vancouver is very active with regular fieldtrips, restoration work parties in Vancouver parks, and weekly Zoomed natural history talks, open to the public, related to birding, marine biology, botanical and general environmental issues. In early February of this year, we could not believe that the former Environment and Climate Change Minister Johnathan Wilkinson was revealed to have blocked a final submission by Canada's own Environment Scientists in a document submission to the Environmental Assessment which stated "project-induced changes to Roberts Bank constitute an unmitigable species-level risk to western sandpipers, and shorebirds more generally".

Since the news made public through a freedom of information request by Roger Emsley, I have to say that NV members have been outraged. In communicating with members as president by phone, email and in person, the most common reactions and expressions have been disappointment, disbelief, and disgust that the former Environment Minister would choose to abrogate the responsibility of protecting the environment, which, surely, should be a cornerstone of his mandate. In the two months since that revelation, the sense of betrayal continues to permeate through the Nature Vancouver community.

The need for RBT2 has not been justified. Global Container Terminal Canada, the largest port operator in BC, has clearly stated that the VFPA has exaggerated container terminal needs. Our federal government has also committed to reduce Canada's export of coal and this should result in less space taken up by coal export operations at the existing Roberts Bank terminal, which could free up space for container shipping. There is also a proposal for expansion of container shipping at the Prince Rupert Port which would have less damaging environmental consequences.

It is up to you to make a decision to protect the environment, not to choose short term gain with the consequence of long term environmental and ecological degradation. After a year of heat domes, record

fire seasons, atmospheric rivers – with all the associated astronomical costs, and loss of life, we cannot afford one more critically bad decision. You can count on all that care about the environment to be closely watching your decision and holding you and your government to account accordingly. I, on the behalf of members of Nature Vancouver, urge you to recommend that this proposed expansion not be approved.

Yours truly,

Nigel Peck  
President  
Nature Vancouver