



Islands Trust

**Islands Trust 2016 resolution to
AVICC/UBCM
Assessment and Mitigation of Marine
Shipping Risks and Impacts in the
Salish Sea**

WHEREAS numerous projects are proposed that would increase marine traffic and anchorage use in the confined waterways of the Salish Sea;

AND WHEREAS the Salish Sea is among the most productive marine ecosystems in the world, and presents challenging conditions for oil spill response;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT Transport Canada assess the cumulative risks and impacts associated with projected vessel traffic increases in the Salish Sea and develop an innovative 20-year mitigation plan.



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Background Assessment and Mitigation of Salish Sea Marine Shipping Risks and Impacts

Special measures are warranted for Salish Sea projects as this international region is among the most productive marine ecosystems in the world. The Salish Sea is a scenic archipelago that provides habitats for an exceptional variety of species: more than 200 types of migratory and resident birds, numerous species of fish, the iconic Orca whale, migrating Gray whales and diverse intertidal life, terrestrial wildlife and vegetation. The significance and sensitivity of our region, and the need for protective measures was internationally recognized in 1973, when an International Joint Commission proposed that the islands and waters adjacent to the British Columbia-Washington State border be protected as an international park in order to maintain water quality and to preserve and protect marine and land-based wildlife habitats and archaeological and historical sites.

Vessel traffic is projected to grow in the region while the negative impacts of marine traffic are already being felt. The federal government's Tanker Safety Expert Panel's 2013 report stated that the waters around the southern tip of Vancouver Island were one of four areas in Canada with the highest probability of a large spill. The report also stated that the southern coast of British Columbia, including Vancouver Island, was one of two areas in Canada with the highest potential impact from a spill.

In 2009 there were 23 ships staying in the Southern Gulf Islands for an average of 6.7 days. By 2014, there were 170 ships staying for an average 9.3 days. The growing industrialization of our region through increased anchorage use is contributing to loss of residents' quality of life and the region's character.

There are eighteen new or expanded proposed or recently completed projects, which cumulatively would create an additional 5,300 annual transits, or a 43% increase in large, commercial marine vessel traffic to and from ports in British Columbia and Washington State. (Source Friends of the San Juans, Sept. 2015).

Potential mitigation measures could include a stand-by rescue tug boat, procedures for anchorage use that reflect socio-economic and environmental priorities, creation of go-to-buoy anchorages, regulations on vessel speed, vessel traffic separation schemes, etc.