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December 12, 2016

File No.: 5450-30

Via email: pm@pm.gc.ca

The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau, P.C., M.P.
Prime Minister of Canada
Office of the Prime Minister of Canada
80 Wellington Street
Ottawa ON K1A 0A2

Dear Prime Minister:

Re: Trans Mountain Pipeline Expansion Approval

I am writing on behalf of the Islands Trust Council to express our profound disappointment about the federal government's decision to approve the Trans Mountain Pipeline Expansion Project. This decision leaves our special region vulnerable to oil spill risks that you deemed unacceptable for British Columbia's north coast.

The Islands Trust Council has been concerned with oil spill and oil tanker issues since 1979. As early as 1983, the Islands Trust Policy Statement included a policy to oppose increased oil tanker traffic in and adjacent to Trust waters and to support measures to reduce such traffic. In 2012, the Islands Trust Council encouraged the Minister of Natural Resources to support the phasing out of crude oil export from Canada's West Coast by tanker and barge as part of a national energy strategy.

Our island constituents have consistently demonstrated overwhelming opposition to this project. Those who love this region are appalled by the idea that our waterways will face increased spill risks and the survival of marine mammals such as orca will be threatened – so that a company can ship bitumen that will further imperil this region and the planet when it is burnt.

There is absolutely no benefit for our region. Enhanced investments in oil spill preparedness are welcome but are so long overdue they in no way make up for the heightened risks this project presents. A diluted bitumen spill resulting from the Project or an oil tanker collision or malfunction could have devastating impacts on the abundant biodiversity of the Salish Sea and could significantly affect species already at risk, as well as harm the liveability and economic well-being of island communities. Our local marine conditions, which include very strong tidal currents in excess of 10 knots at the passes into the Gulf Islands and large tidal ranges throughout, make effective oil spill clean-up impossible or extremely challenging and costly at best.

As a small local government, we dedicated resources to participating in both the National Energy Board process and the Ministerial Review panel process. In the absence of detailed, credible and meaningful answers from the federal government to the six questions posed by the Ministerial Review panel, we don't feel that our input, and the input of our constituents, was heard or valued.

There are 37 First Nations who have asserted Aboriginal interests in the Trust Area – 10 of these are Douglas Treaty Nations with established fishing and harvesting rights in the Gulf Islands. Although we copy First Nations on all correspondence such as this, we have not directly heard their positions on the Trans Mountain Pipeline Expansion Project. Given our commitment to establishing and maintaining a mutually respectful relationship with First Nations, we offer the Islands Trust position while being ready to respectfully consider their positions.

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The Islands Trust was created by provincial legislation in 1974 in recognition of the unique fragility of the ecology of the 470 or so Gulf Islands in the Salish Sea. Twenty-five thousand people live within the Islands Trust Area. Another 13,000 are non-resident property owners. The Strait of Georgia is among the most productive marine ecosystems in the world.

We cherish this place and govern it in trust for all British Columbians.

Sincerely,



Peter Luckham

Chair, Islands Trust Council

pluckham@islandstrust.bc.ca

cc: Christy Clark, Premier of British Columbia
Aitchelitz First Nation
Beecher Bay First Nation
Campbell River First Nation
Cape Mudge First Nation
Chemainus First Nation
Cowichan Tribes
Esquimalt First Nation
Halalt First Nation
Hwiltsun First Nation
K'omoks First Nation
Lake Cowichan First Nation
Lyackson First Nation
Malahat Nation
Matsqui First Nation
Musqueam First Nation
Nanaimo First Nation
Nanoose First Nation
Pauquachin First Nation
Penelakut First Nation
Popkum First Nation
Qualicum First Nation
Seabird Island First Nation
Sechelt First Nation
Semiahmoo First Nation
Skawahlook First Nation
Skowkale First Nation
Sliammon First Nation
Songhees First Nation
Squamish First Nation
Tsartlip First Nation
Tsawout First Nation
Tsawwassen First Nation
Tseycum First Nation
Tseil-Waututh First Nation
Sooke First Nation
Tzeachten First Nation
Yakwekwioose First Nation
Islands Trust Area MPs
Islands Trust Area MLAs
Bowen Island Municipal Council
San Juan County Council
Islands Trust Council
Islands Trust website