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Island Leaders in Canada and US Call on Prime Minister to Abandon Trans Mountain Expansion

VICTORIA — In light of the Canadian Government’s purchase of the Trans Mountain Pipeline and stated commitment to expanding it despite a court ruling quashing the expansion permit, elected representatives from the islands in the Salish Sea, on both sides of the Canadian-U.S. border, have written an open letter urging Prime Minister Trudeau to abandon the expansion project.

The expansion project would result in 400 more oil tankers passing the island communities which the Islands Trust and San Juan County represent. In their open letter, signed by 22 trustees from the Islands Trust and the three San Juan County councilors, the locally elected officials describe how the Salish Sea region will be put at risk by the project, and how its protection – along with the orcas that live in the region – should be of national importance on both sides of the border.

“As elected leaders in the Salish Sea we are compelled to speak out,” said Islands Trust Council Chair, Peter Luckham. “Every day we witness the negative impacts that ever-increasing levels of marine shipping are having on this region. It takes one accident, one mistake, to devastate this internationally important place. The orca’s decline sends a chilling message on the state of the world and humanity’s choices. At this historic moment, we urge the Prime Minister to pause, listen to the message and develop more visionary and less risky ways to generate jobs for Canadians and tax revenues.”

“The impact of a bitumen spill on the lives of our island constituents is unfathomable,” added Bill Watson from San Juan County. “Our economies – so reliant on tourism and a healthy environment – would be ruined; the social fabric of our communities torn apart. The wild salmon and the orca of the region would be in peril. We stand with our fellow Salish Sea representatives in Canada in opposition to this project.”

The Salish Sea is the inland sea that includes Washington’s Puget Sound and British Columbia’s Strait of Georgia. It is one of the most biologically rich inland seas in the world. Together the Islands Trust and San Juan County represent the interests of more than 642 islands within the Salish Sea.

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Notes to media: [Joint open letter](#)
[A webpage with reports and evidence substantiating the concerns](#)

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The Islands Trust Council is a federation of local government bodies representing 26,000 people living within the Islands Trust Area and about 10,000 non-resident property owners. The Islands Trust is responsible for preserving and protecting the unique environment and amenities of the Islands Trust Area through planning and regulating land use, development management, education, cooperation with other agencies, and land conservation.

San Juan County is both a political subdivision of the State of Washington and the local government service provider. The San Juan County Council is the legislative body whose duties include land use and resource management planning and regulations, and public health.