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Islands Trust Welcomes Court Decision on Trans Mountain

VICTORIA – The Islands Trust welcomes today’s unanimous [decision](#) by the Federal Court of Appeal, quashing the federal government’s approval to build the Trans Mountain Pipeline expansion project.

The Islands Trust is resolutely opposed to this project, believing that the increased tanker traffic it would bring to the Salish Sea represents an intolerable risk to the marine and island environments and communities who live and work along the transport corridor.

“The court’s decision aligns with Islands Trust’s beliefs, touching on issues we believe are critical for our local island communities,” explained Islands Trust Council Chair, Peter Luckham. “First, is the need for all levels of government to consult with Indigenous people in a meaningful and truthful manner. We applaud those First Nations who argued so effectively in court. Secondly, the court recognized that the National Energy Board did not properly assess the impacts that increased tanker traffic would have on the sensitive marine environment of the Salish Sea, including the beloved and endangered southern resident orca populations.”

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 the Islands Trust Area waters and to support measures to reduce such traffic.

An oil spill within the Trust Area could have devastating impacts on the abundant biodiversity of the region and significantly affect species at risk, as well harm the liveability and economic well-being of local communities.

“The Islands Trust was an early and leading voice in asking for the federal government to consider the impacts of both marine shipping and diluted bitumen on the environment,” said Chair Luckham. “We thank those agencies and First Nations that argued this case in court. We were with you in spirit and are grateful for your hard work. We hope this decision will cause the government to rethink its position on Trans Mountain and find alternative ways to invest in Canada’s future.”

The Islands Trust is a federation of special-purpose local government bodies representing 26,000 people living within the Islands Trust Area and another 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, co-operation with other agencies, and land conservation. The area covers the islands and waters between the British Columbia mainland and southern Vancouver Island. It includes 13 major islands and more than 450 smaller islands covering 5200 square kilometres.

The 26-member Islands Trust Council makes decisions about overall policy and financial management for the Islands Trust and has broad responsibilities to uphold the Islands Trust mandate to preserve and protect the islands. Trust Council does not make local land use decisions, which are the responsibility of the local trustees within their respective local trust areas.

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