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NORTH VANCOUVER'S MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT

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## North Vancouver's Arctic Connection

Some welcome news for one of North Vancouver's largest employers last week is also welcome news for North Vancouver.

Seaspan Shipyards received the green light to build a new state-of-the-art Polar icebreaker that is the culmination of the federal government's comprehensive strategy to renew the Canadian Coast Guard fleet. The project will sustain 1400 well-paying jobs here in North Vancouver, plus hundreds more along the supply chain both locally and across the country.

Reaction from the local business community has been enthusiastic.

"This continues to demonstrate the key role that North Vancouver plays in Canada's coastal economy," said the North Vancouver Chamber of Commerce. "As Metro Vancouver's largest manufacturer, the jobs at Seaspan and the chain of local suppliers they support remain a vital part of our community and economy in North Vancouver."

Seaspan purpose-built its shipbuilding facility on the North Shore waterfront specifically for vessels of the Polar icebreaker's complexity and size. Its length is equivalent to one and a half CFL football fields.

### Coast Guard renewal

Renewal of the Coast Guard fleet was a personal priority during my tenure as Minister of Fisheries and Oceans. In 2019, the Prime Minister and I announced the procurement of 16 multipurpose vessels (MPVs) from Seaspan that would form the backbone of the Coast Guard going forward. Four months later, in Iqaluit, I announced the government's intention to procure six new intermediate-sized icebreakers.

Seaspan is now taking on responsibility for building one of two larger Polar icebreakers able to operate farther north in more difficult ice conditions and for longer periods than any existing heavy icebreaker. The Polar project alone provides steady work at Seaspan for eight or nine years - in addition to its other National Shipbuilding Strategy-related work, building next-generation ships for the Royal Canadian Navy and the Canadian Coast Guard.

### Community benefits

Given the boom-and-bust history of shipbuilding on the West Coast since WWII, Seaspan's healthy long-term order book provides security and

stability not only for the company's diverse and talented workforce, but also for the community it calls home.

Over the years, North Vancouver has benefitted economically from Seaspan's presence, but also socially, through the company's corporate citizenship. Last week, Seaspan donated \$2.65 million to Lions Gate Hospital. Local organizations supported by the company in recent years include the Harvest Project, Hollyburn Family Services and the Coho Society of the North Shore. The Squamish and Tsleil Waututh are among seven BC First Nations which have partnership agreements with Seaspan, and BCIT has benefitted from investments in marine trades training.

### Maintaining Canada's Arctic presence

The importance of Canada maintaining a year-round presence in the Arctic cannot be overstated: the importance to our sovereignty as an Arctic nation, the importance to the people whose lives and livelihoods depend on these ships supplying their communities, and the importance to our research and understanding of the Arctic in a changing climate.

Canada's North is the 'canary in the coalmine' when it comes to climate change. The region is heating up at almost three times the global average. The impacts of climate change are being witnessed in real time - melting permafrost, damaged infrastructure, invasive species and thinning ice packs. A warming Arctic is attracting more research, exploration and commercial traffic than ever before.

We simply cannot put a price on the value of Canada maintaining its Arctic presence.

Eight decades ago, North Vancouver's shipyards played a crucial role in Canada's war effort, producing nearly half of the cargo ships built in Canada to replace those sunk by German submarines.

Today, with Seaspan's building of the Polar icebreaker and other science research vessels, one could say our local shipyards are once again contributing to a vital national effort - asserting Canada's Arctic sovereignty and assisting in the fight against climate change.

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