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NORTH VANCOUVER'S MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT

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Getting it right on Kinder Morgan

Five months from now, the federal government will decide whether to approve or reject the twinning of Kinder Morgan's 63 year old Trans Mountain Pipeline – which would triple the system's capacity and increase tanker traffic in our harbour.

We would be failing to acquit our responsibility as citizens of North Vancouver and of Canada if we were to sit passively and watch the conversation over the proposed project be over-simplified into a volley of “yes” or “no” sound bites.

Approaching this important issue in a rigorous and thoughtful manner requires a level of dialogue and discussion that can be extremely challenging within the context of a polarizing issue such as this.

As your MP for North Vancouver, a community with a significant stake in the outcome, I feel compelled to highlight the complex range of issues, ensure we've discussed and investigated them fully and to emphasize these considerations in Ottawa.

Community commitment

As a community, let's commit to a rational consideration of risks and benefits and an objective assessment of the extent to which concerns and risks can be appropriately mitigated.

Key benefits associated with the proposed project are reasonably obvious - additional revenues and jobs associated with oil exports, plus potential safety improvements associated with oil presently being shipped by rail due to limited pipeline capacity.

There are, however, legitimate questions and concerns raised by people in North Vancouver that must also be weighed by government as it moves towards the December decision – the most significant being:

- The potential for spills in our harbour and questions about whether spills of diluted bitumen (as opposed to conventional hydrocarbon products) can be effectively contained or cleaned up
- The potential for increased tanker traffic that may have an adverse impact on marine life and, in particular, on the Southern Resident Killer Whale population
- How the proposed pipeline expansion fits with Canada's pledge to combat climate change and with Canada's commitment to a renewed relationship with Indigenous Peoples?

Each of these matters requires thoughtful, well considered responses

that are grounded in data if we are to be able to appropriately assess risks and benefits.

NEB process shortcomings

The process originally utilized to review this proposal had a number of shortcomings. The National Energy Board review, while directly addressing some important issues, was conducted in a manner that was not sufficiently transparent and had procedural flaws.

The new federal government has attempted to address some of these shortcomings through its “Interim Principles” introduced earlier this year. Among them:

- Decisions will be based on science, traditional knowledge of Indigenous peoples and other relevant evidence
- The views of the public and affected communities will be sought and considered
- Indigenous peoples will be meaningfully consulted, and where appropriate, impacts on rights and interests will be accommodated and
- Direct and upstream greenhouse gas emissions linked to the projects under review will be assessed.

The government also appointed an independent three-person panel to conduct further consultation. To date the panel has held 15 public meetings in BC and Alberta and has received over 15,000 submissions to a written questionnaire. The panel will be holding a public town hall in North Vancouver at the North Vancouver District Hall between 2:30-7:00 pm on August 19th.

The work done by the NEB on the Trans Mountain proposal, the additional information gathered as a result of the Interim Principles and the contribution of the new panel will all inform the decision the Government will make later this year.

As we move towards December, I will continue to engage in discussion with constituents, with my colleagues in the federal BC Liberal Caucus, with Members of Parliament from across the country and with Ministers in the Government.

My objective is to ensure that when a decision on Trans Mountain is ultimately made, we can all agree it is thoughtful, evidence-based and provides reasonable answers to the legitimate questions that have been raised.

Sponsored by the Electoral District Association of North Vancouver, Liberal Party of Canada
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