



capital region board  
regional action. global opportunity.

Op Ed

September 20, 2016

It's Our Coastline Too

In a November 2015 Mandate Letter to Transport Minister Marc Garneau, Prime Minister Trudeau issued a public directive to implement a moratorium on crude oil tankers on the northwest coast of Canada.

We took notice of the directive, but, confident in our new federal government's promise of "openness, transparency and fairness" to all Canadians, we have been waiting for our opportunity to be engaged, along with all Canadians, on this important topic.

The Capital Region Board is a group of 24 elected mayors representing over 1.2 million Canadians in the Edmonton Metropolitan Region. This is nearly 32% of Alberta's population, in the sixth largest metropolitan area in Canada. The health and sustainability of our region and our province has a significant and long-term impact on the Canadian economy and the livelihood of Canadians.

Alberta accounts for nearly 20% of Canada's GDP, with our region responsible for 30% of that total. Over the next 25 years, the Alberta oil industry alone will purchase \$117 billion in goods and services from other Canadian provinces and create approximately 830,000 jobs - 126,000 of those outside Alberta.

Our success and our ability to contribute fully to the Canadian economy, is reliant on an interconnected national infrastructure – inclusive of coastal transport options - that moves our product to market.

It may seem counterintuitive that a land-locked region would be concerned about a proposed tanker ban affecting a coastline 1,400 km away. But in fact, such a ban causes a ripple effect that only just begins on the coast.

This proposed ban would affect Canadians across the country in many and varied ways, and we want our voices heard - *It is our coastline too.*

Contrary to the highly publicized Mandate Letter, the consultation process associated with this directive has been cloaked in silence and rushed through in under six weeks. There was no public announcement that consultation was underway at the end of August 2016, or that input is due by the end of September 2016.

In fact, the Government of Canada consultation website that supposedly gives a voice to Canadians boasts over 780 issues – from those of sweeping national importance such as climate change and the marijuana legalization to more localized issues such as the Kitimat Clean Refinery Project and the northern leopard frog recovery strategy.

Noticeably absent from this site though is the tanker moratorium.

That important consultation has been buried on the Transport Canada website with a brief opportunity to electronically submit your thoughts. Further, the consultation asks “how” to formalize a tanker ban, not “if” a ban should even be implemented.

It appears this significant decision has already been made and now it’s just a matter of managing the process. This is contrary to our government’s promise to engage and genuinely talk with Canadians *before* it acts.

There is no argument that First Nations and other local communities who live along the northwest coast of British Columbia are at ground zero and must be heard. But equally, our ability to get our products to market relies on an integrated and open transportation network, and that network includes a coastline we believe belongs to all Canadians.

We may disagree on impacts but we have are asking to have our voice equally heard – *it is our coastline too.*

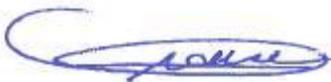
While we do not live on the coast, the potential impact of this ban to our way of life is just as profound. In his Mandate Letter, Prime Minister Trudeau stated, “it is important that we acknowledge mistakes when we make them. Canadians do not expect us to be perfect – they expect us to be honest, open, and sincere in our efforts to serve the public interest.”

For that reason, we at the Capital Region Board, and on behalf of the 1.2 million Canadians that we serve in the Edmonton Metropolitan Region, invite the Federal Government to come and speak with us.

We invite the Federal Government to rectify what seems to be an oversight and take the time to properly consult with all Canadians on the full extent of the tanker ban’s social, economic, environmental and cultural ramifications before making a decision and creating any framework or policy.

We are ready to talk. We want the opportunity to have our voices heard.

*It is our coastline too.*



Mayor Nolan Crouse, Board Chair  
Capital Region Board

*The CRB represents the 24 municipalities of Edmonton Metropolitan Region, leading regional action toward global opportunity with a focus on growth, transportation, housing and regional services.*

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