

December 4th, 2013

Sent via email and fax

The Honourable Terry Lake
Minister of Health
Room 337,
Parliament Buildings
Victoria, BC
V8V 1X4

Dear Minister Lake:

We write today on behalf of our supporters to ask you to intervene in the proposal to build new coal transshipment facilities in Surrey and on Texada Island for the export of US thermal coal.

As you are aware, there is widespread opposition to this proposal. Over 26,000 people have signed petitions against the project and numerous municipal governments have passed motions opposing it, as has the board of Metro Vancouver and the Islands Trust. Other municipal governments have passed motions calling for public hearings and a comprehensive health impact assessment (HIA) prior to approval.

As you are also aware, both Vancouver Coastal Health and Fraser Health Chief Medical Health Officers have written to the Vancouver Fraser Port Authority requesting that it work with them to conduct an HIA of the Fraser Surrey Docks proposal. In addition, the Vancouver Coastal Health Medical Health Officer for the Sunshine Coast has written to the BC Ministry of Mines requesting an HIA for the Texada Island facility.

In a letter dated October 17th, 2013 the Port Authority closed the door on collaboration with the Chief Medical Health Officers on this issue. As you know, the Port Authority indicated that rather than being involved in determining the scope and terms of reference on the current Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) of the Fraser Surrey Docks proposal, the Chief Medical Health Officers would simply receive a copy of the completed EIA for comment.

On November 13th the Vancouver Coastal Health and Fraser Health Authority Chief Medical Health Officers sent a detailed critique of the coal export EIA to the Vancouver Fraser Port Authority. However, comments made since that date [in the media](#) by the CEO of the Port Authority lead us to conclude that the Port considers the matter closed and the assessment complete.

Furthermore, as of this date the Ministry of Mines has not responded to the Vancouver Coastal Health Medical Health Officer for the Sunshine Coast.

It is disappointing that the Port Authority, charged with working in the public interest, has decided not to collaborate with the Chief Medical Health Officers, appointed by the province to protect public

health. It is equally disappointing that the provincial government itself has failed to respond to the Medical Health Officer on this matter.

We think it is time for you to use your powers under the *Health Act* to intervene in this issue to protect public health. In our view, there is sufficient evidence of potential health hazards associated with this project that it warrants a comprehensive health impact assessment. You have ample power to intervene on the Texada coal transshipment end of the proposal, and we understand there are clear precedents for a provincial role in evaluating the potential health impacts associated with that portion of the project taking place on federal port lands at Fraser Surrey Docks as well. Furthermore, we think that as Minister of Health you should be supporting the efforts of the Medical Health Officer's to ensure an adequate assessment of public health risks, given that they are Provincial delegates. operating under a Provincial Health Act.

Our supporters and those who have raised concerns about this project are now looking to the province to ensure its entire scope is adequately assessed and the public interest protected. We look forward to a reply from you outlining how you intend to respond to this matter. In addition, we would like to reiterate the request from Ms Laura Benson of the Dogwood Initiative for a meeting with you at your earliest convenience to discuss this matter.

Thank you for giving this your consideration,

Kevin Washbrook, Voters Taking Action on Climate Change, Vancouver
CaroleAnn Leishman, Pebble in the Pond Environmental Society, Powell River
Paula Williams, Communities and Coal, Surrey
Eoghan Moriarty, No More Coal Exports, Delta
Laura Benson, Dogwood Initiative, Vancouver
James Mack, Salish Sea Land and Marine Conservation Society, Van Anda
Donald Gordon, Coal Dust Free Salish Sea, Lasqueti Island
Andrew Fall, Lasqueti Community Association, Lasqueti Island
Andrew Murray, New Westminster Environmental Partners

CC:

Dr Patricia Daly, Chief Medical Health Officer, Vancouver Coastal Health
Dr Paul Van Buynder, Chief Medical Health Officer, Fraser Health