

# north shore news

## District of North Vancouver votes against Kinder Morgan pipeline plan

### Council voices opposition to increased tanker traffic

[Brent Richter](#) / North Shore News

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Photo file

Add the District of North Vancouver to the list of communities that have formally opposed Kinder Morgan's application to twin the Trans Mountain pipeline to Burrard Inlet.

District council passed a motion similar to ones passed by the councils in Burnaby and Vancouver, following a lengthy presentation from staff Monday night on the environmental, health and economic concerns raised by increased tanker traffic or a potential spill at Westridge Terminal.

In its submission to the National Energy Board this September, the district will highlight the importance of the waterfront environment, including efforts to restore and protect ecologically sensitive areas like Maplewood Conservation Area.

With 40 kilometres of shoreline and 72 creeks opening into Burrard Inlet and Indian Arm, the risks were simply too much to abide, Coun. Lisa Muri said, before introducing the motion.

"(The risk) is absolutely too great to allow the tanker volume to increase three-fold in this inlet, in English Bay, in the Salish Sea and on the coast of British Columbia," she said. "We have been very vocal advocates for the environment for decades. It is what we are known for in British Columbia and we'll stand up with the mightiest and challenge these kinds of impacts that are coming into our community."

That sentiment was shared by Coun. Jim Hanson.

"We're going to hear a lot of very bold predictions that you can't have spills. Apparently you can't have accidents at atomic energy plants either. Apparently you can't have full-size passenger ferries sink in a modern world in British Columbia but all those things do happen and North Vancouver district quite simply has everything to lose and virtually

nothing to gain by the twinning of the Kinder Morgan pipeline project,” he said.

District residents have shown a clear consensus of opposition to the Trans Mountain project, Hanson added.

But, at least one member of council warned his colleagues: Be careful what you wish for.

Coun. Roger Bassam said the only question facing the NEB is whether the new pipeline should be the delivery system for oil destined to leave Alberta.

“What’s the alternative? Will oil still be moving? The answer is yes, absolutely. The economic incentive to get the oil out of the tar sands and move it to market is enormous,” he said. “So is it oil by rail? I’m absolutely opposed to that. That’s the worst possible option that we have.”

Bassam was the lone dissenter on Muri’s motion.

Though they supported the motion, Couns. Mathew Bond and Robin Hicks also urged their fellow council members and those listening to think of the bigger context of not just the tankers and risks but also the implications of our own oil-dependent culture.

“What we’re saying here is people around the rest of the world don’t deserve to have the energy that we have in our society,” Bond said. “We need to own up to our side of the equation, which is reducing our dependence on oil.”

Getting off oil is a laudable goal, Coun. Doug MacKay-Dunn agreed, but council was only being asked to vote for its residents’ interests on this specific project, he argued. “This is about our local community and what would happen if disaster struck,” he said. “Yes, we’re going to have to get away from fossil fuels, absolutely. We’re going to have to make changes but that’s not going to happen in the next 50 years.”

Mayor Richard Walton also showed some hesitation before voting in favour of the motion. The district has faced criticism from anti-pipeline advocates for not taking action sooner, but Walton said he was proud of the district’s habit of studying issues before taking a stance on them. That’s what will matter most during the NEB hearings, he said.

“It’s the points and the facts that we put forward, not making a statement as some of our neighbouring communities have done a year, two years or three years ago, long before there was any serious review of the processes,” he said. “In my view, it takes your credibility and it shreds it.”

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