

Applaud Neptune's increase in coal capacity

BY KENT SMITH, NORTH SHORE NEWS APRIL 17, 2013

Dear Editor:

I have read with interest the "doomsday" articles and comments being made about Neptune Terminals' plans to upgrade and increase its throughput (notably your Feb. 1 front page story: Coal Terminal Upgrade Under Fire).

It is truly amazing and laughable to me that the group calling itself Voters Taking Action on Climate Change can make statements like: "During transportation, a substantial amount of coal dust can be seen from rail cars" without justifying them. Why is it that Kevin Washbrook can make a statement like that uncontested and without proof? He makes it sound like there is a black plume of dust coming off the railcars as they are in motion. If that were true, there would be a black streak of coal from North Vancouver to Elkford. Last time I looked, no such thing exists - even after five decades and hundreds of millions of tonnes of coal.

Does VTACC really think it can stop China from generating power and making steel by limiting what Neptune and other port facilities ship from their terminals? Curbing commodity exports from Canada will only disadvantage us and shrink our economy, increasing our debt and reduce our standard of living. Exporting coal and other commodities from Canada has kept us from experiencing the economic hardship felt in the U.S. and Europe. PMV's review stuck to the facts, used common sense and approved the expansion.

Increasing Neptune's and other port facilities' capacity and efficiency should be applauded. We should be encouraging industry to invest in new technology as much as possible to make the most of what we have. Saying "no" is easy but it doesn't pay the bills. VTACC would have greater credibility if Washbrook and his group were to promote clean-air technology and work to encourage countries burning coal to use the latest technologies to reduce emissions. Simply stopping burning coal isn't a reality.

Kent Smith, North Vancouver

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