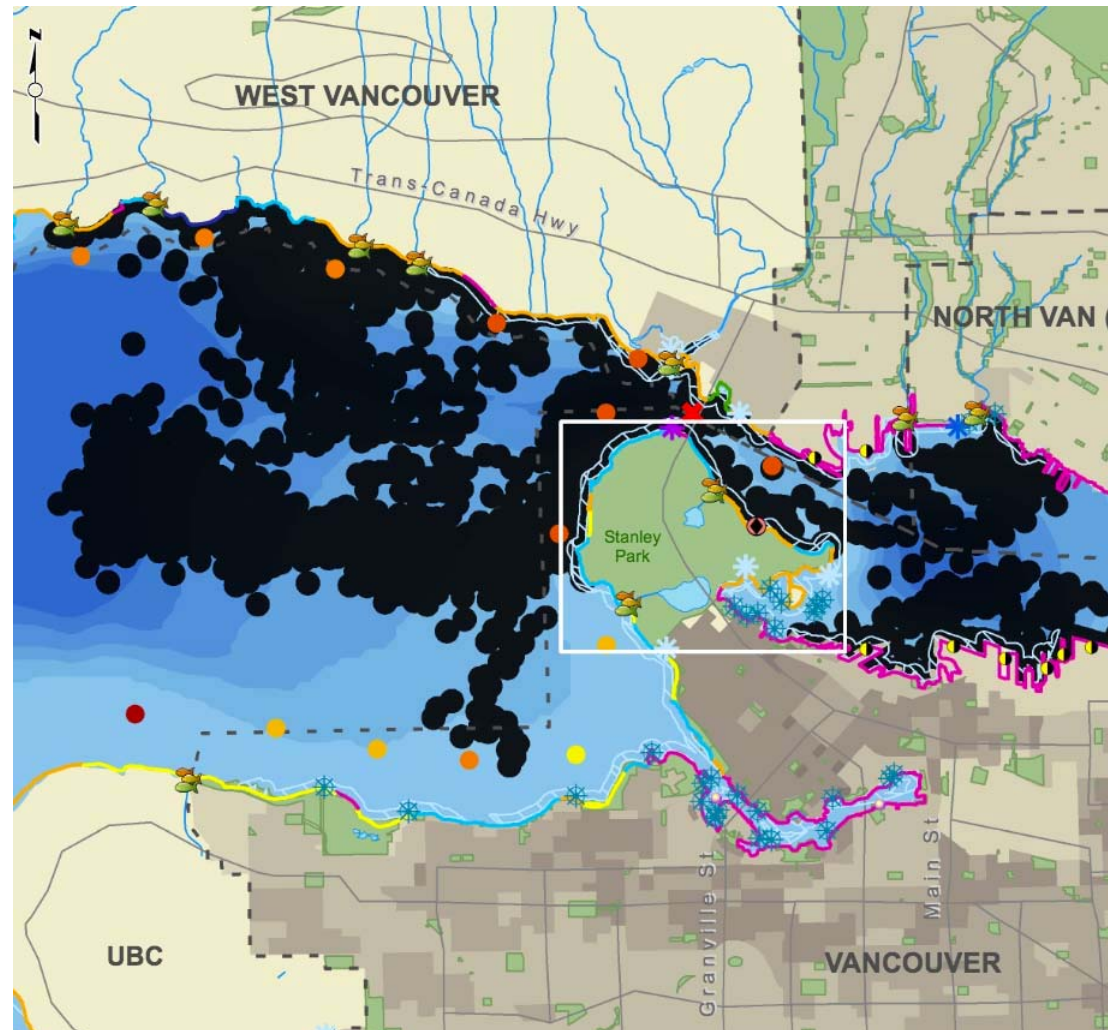


Up to 90 per cent of Burrard Inlet oil spill would reach shoreline in hours: report

An independent spill trajectory model was created for the cities of Vancouver and Burnaby, and the Tsleil-Waututh Nation, in response to Kinder Morgan's pipeline expansion plans

BY TIFFANY CRAWFORD AND KELLY SINOSKI, VANCOUVER SUN MAY 16, 2015



This map shows the projected oil spill spread (in black) in 48 hours.

Photograph by: Handout, City of Vancouver

Metro Vancouver will send a letter to the National Energy Board stating its concerns about the potential effects of the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion on the region's assets, infrastructure and environment.

The move coincided with the release of an independent oil spill study that suggests up to 90 per cent of the oil from a major oil tanker spill in the Burrard Inlet would reach the shoreline within 48 hours.

The model was created by Genwest Systems Inc. of Edmonds, Wash., to show the probability of oil spreading to specific locations along the Burrard Inlet in four worst-case scenarios, the largest of which involves a spill about a third of the low estimate for the infamous Exxon Valdez spill.

The study was done for the cities of Vancouver and Burnaby, and the Tsleil-Waututh First Nation, which argue that Kinder Morgan's failed to carry out an adequate analysis of the consequences of a major spill.

In all four modelling scenarios, between 50 per cent and 90 per cent of the oil would reach the shorelines quickly, the report concludes, "causing significant impacts to human health, the environment and the economy."

Metro directors agree the risk of an oil spill would be a huge threat to the regional district.

"If you look to the future and try to see what this province is going to look like in 10 years you only have to look to the Massey Bridge to realize industrialization on the Fraser River is going to be much increased over the coming years," Richmond Mayor Malcolm Brodie said. "This has to be far wider (issue) than the Burrard Inlet because we have our own set of issues whether its LNG or jet fuel coming up and down that river in vast quantities."

Genwest's report also looked at the oil spill model that Trans Mountain provided to the National Energy Board, and says it does not consider that beached oil is often refloated to cause damage elsewhere.

"The failure to allow refloating to occur could lead to significant underestimates of both the extent and duration of concern associated with a spill," the report said. In particular, "this shortcoming would be more significant in scenarios representing spills in Burrard Inlet and the Fraser Delta."

Trans Mountain spokeswoman Ali Hounsell said Kinder Morgan "stand by our assessment that was conducted by leading experts in the fields of marine and transportation safety. But that said, this is part of the process and it is important that we look at other viewpoints and other resources."

She said its staff were still reviewing the full report, but it appears the Genwest modelling doesn't take into account the efforts that would be launched to contain and clean up spilled oil.

"This looks at consequence but doesn't look at the probability," she said. "The (Genwest) video shows the movement of oil but did that include spill response? We have standards and the likelihood of no spill response is incredibly slim."

Genwest said it used a model that has been used by agencies around the world to predict oil spill movement, including during the Deepwater Horizon disaster.

The model uses dots, each one representing 2,000 litres of oil, to show how where the oil would disperse over 48 hours. In one scenario, the dots representing 16,000,000 litres of oil, or one-fifth of what a tanker might carry, are spilled in the First Narrows, and spread, reaching the coastline of West and North Vancouver, Stanley Park, Coal Harbour and then stretch the length of Vancouver's shoreline including Kitsilano and Jericho and cover the length of Burnaby's shoreline.

"Oil spreads quickly in the confined geophysical setting in Burrard Inlet. The combined results of all the scenarios demonstrate that oil has the potential to spread throughout Burrard Inlet, from the Indian and Port Moody Arms to the outer harbour and beyond," the report concludes.

Vancouver mayor Gregor Robertson called the report "alarming," and said many residents believe the Kinder Morgan proposal poses "far too great a risk to our local economy and environment." In a statement, he said the study highlights the need for the city to continue its opposition to a seven-fold increase of oil tanker traffic in local waters.

"The more we learn about it, the riskier it gets," Robertson said at the Metro board meeting.

However, other directors argued they shouldn't be too hasty in opposing the pipeline expansion, saying it's safer to transport oil by pipeline than by rail. Surrey Coun. Bruce Hayne suggested the focus should be on drafting resolutions to get the federal government to take more responsibility in dealing with future oil spills. Other directors noted that once the oil leaves the tanker, the NEB no longer has any responsibility for it.

"I would love to see us come out with a more comprehensive statement about the risk to the region and the political responsibility," said North Vancouver District Mayor Richard Walton. "This is the underlying issue and it's not being addressed adequately."

Kinder Morgan Canada has applied to the National Energy Board (NEB) to expand its Trans Mountain Pipeline to triple its capacity. This would increase the number of full tankers in Burrard Inlet from 34 from five a month.

Vancouver, Burnaby, and the Tsleil-Waututh First Nation are interveners in the NEB hearing process and will be filing their written evidence to the NEB on May 27.

ticrawford@vancouver.sun.com

ksinoski@vancouver.sun.com

Learn more and read the full report [here](#)

Download the oil spill modelling animation [here](#)

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