

Grandmother questioned after photographing oil tanks

Lesslie Askin's name was entered in database as a suspicious person

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BURNABY NOW

A New Westminster senior wants her name scrubbed from a database tracking national security threats following an incident close to the Burnaby Mountain tank farm.

On Aug. 3, Lesslie Askin, a 71-year-old grandmother and retired systems analyst, was taking pictures of oil storage tanks at a Shell facility across the street from Kinder Morgan's tank farm. She sparked the interest of Kinder Morgan security staff, who arrived on the scene as she was leaving.

"I actually smiled and waved, because I'm actually quite a friendly person," Askin said.

Ten days later, police were knocking on her door in New Westminster, asking questions. Askin explained she was taking pictures to send in with her

letter of comment to the National Energy Board for the Kinder Morgan expansion hearing.

Askin found out the officer worked with the Integrated National Security Enforcement Team, which includes CSIS, the Canada Border Services Agency and the RCMP. The team's primary goal is to monitor terrorism and threats to national security.

Alarmed, she contacted the office of Burnaby-Douglas MP Kennedy Stewart, whose staff followed up and discovered her name was entered in a database as a suspicious person, but the file had been closed. Askin has since filed an Access to Information request, hoping for more answers.

Stewart raised the issue in the House of Commons Friday, asking the government to apologize and ensure there is nothing permanent on Askin's record.

"It could cause a lot of trouble for the crossing (of) borders and

whatnot," Stewart said.

In an email, Kinder Morgan confirmed security personnel saw someone taking pictures. According to Kinder Morgan, security approached the person, who then fled the scene, and the incident was reported to the RCMP.

"Our top priority remains the security and safety of our operations, staff and the community. It is our security protocol to record and file an internal report of any suspicious activities surrounding our facilities and to inform the RCMP of the incident. Any matter reported to RCMP is to ensure the security and safety of our facilities and the surrounding community is maintained," the statement reads.

Kinder Morgan also plans to reach out to Askin and answer any questions she has about the facility.

As for fleeing the scene, Askin

said that was a "complete crock."

Meanwhile, Stewart is hoping anyone else with police issues related to Kinder Morgan will contact his constituency office.

SETTING IT STRAIGHT

A passage in an opinion piece published Sept. 19 on page B7 should have read: "The science tells us that if we do all the right things starting today, we might squeak by with 2 degrees Celsius of warming. Harper and Clark have us on track for 6 degrees Celsius. The less-than 1 degree Celsius we have already experienced is causing extreme weather and the melting of ice caps. No one knows what a 6-degree-celsius world would look like." A technical glitch caused incorrect numbers to appear.