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Trans Mountain's tunnel muddle; NEB muddles through - Patrick Brown

There is now a lengthy delay in proceedings resulting from Trans Mountain's decision to tunnel through Burnaby Mountain rather than tackle the inevitable complications of laying fresh pipe through a well-established residential part of Burnaby. Meanwhile, the National Energy Board continues with segments of the original environmental hearings.

Trans Mountain must recognize Burnaby's bylaws

Trans Mountain had originally met with opposition from the City of Burnaby when it sought permission to carry out exploratory work to determine how practical it might be to drill a tunnel through Burnaby Mountain to connect its tank farm on the south side with the Westridge Terminal on the north side. The company then applied to the National Energy Board for permission. The NEB gave its approval, but said that, in carrying out its exploration, Trans Mountain would have to recognize all applicable Burnaby bylaws.

Burnaby Mountain is the site of Simon Fraser University, and a large nature conservancy.

First Nations Oral Hearings

Parts of the original hearings, intended to bring out the concerns of the numerous First Nations along the Trans Mountain pipeline route, are still being held by the National Energy Board. Oral traditional evidence was heard at the Edmonton Hotel and Convention Centre from Monday August 25 to Wednesday, August 27.

Transport Canada TERMPOL evidence

The NEB has asked Transport Canada for additional information from its TERMPOL review of the impact of tanker

traffic on the area of the TransMountain terminal at Westridge, and also additional information on the tanker route through Vancouver Harbour, English Bay, the Strait of Georgia, Haro Strait, and the Strait of Juan de Fuca.

TERMPOL refers to the environmental evaluation procedures that Transport Canada follows in reviewing its needs for navigational aids and procedures at deep-sea shipping terminals. The National Energy Board has expressed the need for TERMPOL details by November 1, 2014, because a number of intervenors in the hearings wish to review Transport Canada arrangements for expected tanker traffic.

Vancouver City Seeks Court Decision On Climate Change Component

The City of Vancouver long ago expressed its concerns regarding the climate change effects of the combustion of crude oil delivered to the coast through the proposed expansion of the Trans Mountain pipeline. Now it is going to court to obtain a judicial determination of whether climate change should have been included in the review panel's terms of reference.

The City will seek a judicial review of the NEB decision to exclude climate change from its 'list of issues'. Sadhu Johnston, deputy city manager said: 'The city of Vancouver is the largest port city in the country and we have a lot of coastline. We are already being impacted by changing sea level.'

'We are directly impacted by the burning of these fossil fuels and we believe that does need to be taken into account—the cost of that and the implications of that,' he continued. ☞