

Global Container Terminals Deltaport Expansion Berth 4 Project
Submitted by
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1. Introduction

It is time to recognize that there must be no further port or industrial development on Roberts Bank. This includes the recent proposal to add a fourth berth to the Deltaport Container Terminal.

Global Container Terminals has initiated a project to expand its existing Deltaport three-berth container terminal on Roberts Bank in Delta BC by the addition of a fourth berth and other ancillary activities.

Against Port Expansion in the Fraser Estuary BC (APE) is a broad-based community group of concerned citizens, consisting of people from various backgrounds including business owners, members of the work force, scientists, and environmental groups.

APE is totally opposed to any further port development in the Lower Fraser and its Estuary, therefore we are opposed to the Deltaport Berth Four expansion even though it appears, from studies currently available, this project is less environmentally damaging than the proposed RBT2 project. We will want to see how this Environmental Assessment proceeds and will actively participate in it.

APE was formed as a community group in the early 2000s when a group of like-minded citizens came together to stop any further industrial or port expansion on Roberts Bank. As a group its supporters have participated actively in all port related project discussions in the area. This has involved investigating and research into environmental impacts and issues, meetings with scientists, public meetings and presentations, many meetings with government agencies at the municipal, regional, provincial and federal levels, active participation on committees and working groups and liaison with other environmental groups.

Most recently APE participated actively in the multi-year environmental assessment for the Vancouver Fraser Port Authority's Roberts Bank Container Terminal 2 (RBT2) project, a project that APE opposes in its totality based on the science and facts of the RBT2 environmental assessment.

The community group recognizes that any plans for further container terminal expansion on Roberts Bank will see the loss of globally-significant wetlands and habitat (classified as a Globally Significant Important Bird and Biodiversity Area - IBA) for migratory birds, shorebirds, waterfowl, salmon, herring, crabs, other fishes and orca whales; degradation of the quality of life for thousands of Lower Mainland residents; and the industrialization of prime agricultural land.

2. Roberts Bank

The Lower Fraser River, its estuary, Roberts Bank and the surrounding area of the Salish Sea are at a tipping point. The Lower Fraser and its estuary have already lost 80 percent of its natural habitat. Any further port or industrial development risks breaking the chain of the Pacific Flyway and reducing this ecosystem and its ecological values. Its critical feeding grounds supports internationally recognized groups of waterfowl, shorebirds and seabirds that utilize the habitats of Roberts Bank throughout the year. It is equally important habitat for fishes and other wildlife.

Environment Canada has been stating its concerns about port development since the early 2000s. In its 2006 report on the Deltaport Third Berth Project Environment Canada scientists (now Environment and Climate Change Canada – ECCC) stated the following:

“EC has substantive concerns with the Deltaport Third Berth Project proposal, in particular because of the risk that it will act cumulatively and negatively with existing project impacts upon the marine habitats and fish and wildlife assemblages of Roberts Bank”.

It then went on to state more generally:

“We are concerned that the "chain" of the Pacific Flyway could be broken for shorebirds at some point given the ongoing economic development in the Delta. This constitutes a major risk for Canada's environmental reputation and the economic and social benefits derived from wildlife”.

In 2019, during the environmental assessment for the Roberts Bank Terminal 2 project, ECCC continued to raise environmental concerns about port development on Roberts Bank and its adverse environmental effects to wildlife that rely on the area and is a critical source of food for millions of shorebirds.

Looking overall at the Fraser River estuary and the Southern Salish Sea, if Canada is to save the Pacific Flyway, the ecological integrity of Roberts Bank and the abundant wildlife in the Southern Salish sea then **no further port development of any kind can be allowed on Roberts Bank.**

3. West Coast Canada Container Terminal Capacities and Expansions

There are five container terminals on the West Coast. Deltaport, Vanterm, Centerm and Fraser Surrey Docks are in Vancouver. Fairview is in Prince Rupert, as will be South Kaien when it opens for business.

There is sufficient terminal capacity, in operation or planned without the need to build any new terminals in Vancouver.

On January 21, 2008, David Emerson (the then Minister for Gateway) released a Strategic Advisors Report on the Asia Pacific Gateway Initiative. Authored by three prominent business leaders who were appointed by Emerson, the report made a number of sensible recommendations concerning Canada’s west coast container ports. Amongst those recommendations:

“We recommend that policy makers develop container capacity in Prince Rupert before making any investments in Vancouver beyond what have been announced to date”.

It was the right recommendation then and remains so now.

Prince Rupert’s potential capacity has not yet been maximized. The current Fairview capacity is 1.5 mill. TEUs and they are expanding to 2.0 mill. TEUs. Prince Rupert also plans to build a second terminal on South Kaien Island. Subject to market demand it is expected to be operational by 2028. When complete it will have capacity of 3 mill. TEUs, giving Prince Rupert as much as 5 mill. TEUs in capacity.

Black Quay carried out the container traffic forecasts for the Berth 4 project in 2019. The 2020 global pandemic has changed the growth outlook for container trade. Whilst VFPA container volumes have recovered somewhat, these are still down by 5 percent year to date as of September 2020 when compared to 2019. Furthermore 2019 actual volumes were flat when compared to 2018.

The Berth 4 proposal suggests, using publicly available forecasts, that the compound annual growth rate (CAGR) for West Coast Canada since 2008 is 4.6 percent. It is Prince Rupert that has seen much of the growth since opening Fairview in 2007. In fact the CAGR for Vancouver Area container terminals since 2008 is under 3 percent (2.86%).

The Vancouver Fraser Port Authority has existing near-term expansions at Vanterm, Centerm and Deltaport. When complete VFPA will have over 6 mill. TEUs in capacity. With Prince Rupert’s capacity of 4-5 mill. TEUs Canada West Coast will have over 10 mill. TEUs.

West Coast Canada Container Terminals	2020 Capacity TEUs	2022 Capacity TEUs	2025 Capacity TEUs	2030 Capacity TEUs
<u>Vancouver</u>				
GCT Deltaport	2,400,000	2,400,000	2,400,000	3,200,000
GCT Vanterm	835,000	1,052,000	1,052,000	1,052,000
DPW Centerm	900,000	1,500,000	1,500,000	1,500,000
DPW FSD	450,000	450,000	450,000	450,000
TOTAL VFPA	4,585,000	5,402,000	5,402,000	6,202,000
<u>Prince Rupert</u>				
DPW Fariview*	1,350,000	1,600,000	1,800,000	1,800,000
DPW South Kaien**	-	-	-	2,500,000
TOTAL PRPA	1,350,000	1,600,000	1,800,000	4,300,000
TOTAL	5,935,000	7,002,000	7,202,000	10,502,000

NOTES

* Could handle as much as 2 million TEUs

** Could handle as much as 3 million TEUs

The 2019 West Coast Canada container volumes were 4.6 mill. TEUs. At an anticipated long-term annual growth rate of 3 percent, West Coast Canada can

expect to handle 8.5 mill. TEUs by 2040. With total terminal capacities of over 10 mill. TEUs it is obvious there will be sufficient West Coast container terminal capacity for decades to come without ever needing to add Berth 4 to Deltaport nor to build Roberts Bank Terminal 2.

It also needs to be understood that a significant percentage of the containers moving through West Coast Canadian ports is in fact US traffic. Why should Canada be risking its environment to handle US container traffic, which is in any event discretionary and can be handled by US ports?

4. Environmental Issues

Global Container Terminals suggests that their Berth 4 project is more environmentally sustainable than RBT2. Whilst this may be true, there are still potential significant adverse environmental and other negative effects, including:

- Loss of an area of biofilm due to the expanded causeway that is an important food source for migratory and other shorebirds;
- Negative impact to the Pacific Flyway used by millions of migratory shorebirds in Canada's Most Important Bird Area;
- Threatens endangered Orca Whales, already listed under the Species at Risk Act (SARA), perhaps driving them to extinction;
- Increases threats to barn owls listed as threatened under SARA;
- Risks further depletion of Fraser River salmon stocks;
- Increases light pollution, which has harmful effects on migratory bird species that carry out seasonal movements at night. Migration may be the most challenging stage of the annual cycle for survival, as conditions encountered both en route on the Pacific flyway and in their feeding grounds are often unfamiliar and unpredictable;
- Nocturnal migrants, in particular, are faced with light pollution, an anthropogenic hazard that has increased rapidly in the Roberts Bank area;
- Cumulative effects that have not been properly assessed;
- Increases air light and noise pollution for residents living in Ladner and Tsawwassen with negative effects to health and enjoyment of community and nature. The Berth 4 expansion is closer to residential areas and moves the skyglow, light, air, and noise pollution closer to residents homes;
- Industrializes our communities and puts scarce farmland at greater risk;
- Unnecessary risks to further environmental degradation on Roberts Bank, when West Coast Canada already has sufficient terminal expansions elsewhere to satisfy container trading needs for years to come.
- Increased marine vessel traffic and resultant congestion in the Salish Sea and through the Strait of Juan de Fuca;
- Doubles port truck traffic on highways and through the Massey tunnel;
- The rail route through the Fraser Canyon is stressed and at capacity. It cannot handle another 8 container trains per day;
- Overall increases in road and rail traffic that cause congestion and accidents;
- Potential for more loss of valuable agricultural land;
- Massive expansion of warehouses and logistics facilities on agricultural land;
- Wildlife fatalities from port infrastructure and operations.

These all need to be investigated in any environmental assessment and their environmental and community effects understood and properly evaluated using peer-reviewed science.

5. Southern Gulf Islands, South Salish Sea and Juan de Fuca Strait

Overall vessel traffic transiting the Southern Gulf Islands, the Salish Sea and the Strait of Juan de Fuca have seen huge increases. This traffic to and from Vancouver area ports encompasses cruise ships, oil tankers, bulk carriers, container vessels, barges, ferries and other miscellaneous ships. It is destined to increase even further with more oil tankers, LNG carriers, aviation fuel carriers and container vessels. All these vessels plus many more from Seattle area ports must then transit the narrow Juan de Fuca Strait.

These vessels cause significant damage including:

- Noise that disrupts the whale population
- Harm to birds that are attracted to vessel lights during nighttime
- Wave action causing shoreline erosion
- Air pollution from ships' engine exhausts

Not only that but the more vessels that move the more likely are accidents and oil spills.

In addition with the increases in overall ship traffic more and more vessels are using anchorages in the Southern Gulf Islands whilst they wait for berth access. This results in air, noise and light pollution and disturbance to Gulf Island residents as well as pollution in surrounding waters.

It is time:

- To recognize that these already congested waterways simply cannot handle any more ship traffic.
- To move some of this traffic to less congested waterways.
- To look at the best interests of Canada, not the balkanized self-interest of individual port authorities.
- To protect Canada's international reputation as an environmental custodian

It is time to move some of this traffic away from the Fraser River estuary and the south Salish Sea to less congested waterways.

That is why any further container terminal expansion must take place in Prince Rupert, where vessels can make transits in and out of port through waterways that are easy to navigate and are not at all congested.

6. Conclusion

The future of the Fraser River its estuary and the Salish Sea is in the balance. Approval for the Global Container Terminals' Berth 4 and Vancouver Fraser Port Authority's RBT2 projects must be denied, based on the currently available information and conclusion of the RBT2 Panel that stated the RBT2 project will "result in numerous adverse residual and cumulative effects."

Canada must protect the environmental values and integrity of the Fraser River Estuary, therefore - ***no further port development of any kind can be allowed on Roberts Bank.***