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Premier Gordon Campbell
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May 23, 2007

Subject: Deltaport Expansion and Climate Change

Dear Premier Campbell:

A recent Business Council of BC Report suggests that your pledge to cut BC greenhouse gas emissions by one third by the year 2020 is achievable only if stringent measures are taken. It states that 40 percent of BC greenhouse gases come from the transportation sector. It is therefore incongruous that certain members of your government appear to be firmly supporting a massive container port expansion on Roberts Bank.

As you may be aware our community group met with four of your cabinet ministers, their support staff and Delta South MLA Valerie Roddick, in Victoria on May 15 to discuss our concerns about the proposed container port expansion at Deltaport. We suggested that there were other more viable alternatives – especially in Prince Rupert – and that the Asia/Pacific Gateway Strategy can be met without any further expansion at Deltaport. We were surprised to run into apparent opposition to Prince Rupert's potential from two of your ministers. They seem ill-informed on the plans for this new container port, and the publicized figures that suggest it will eventually be capable of handling 4 million TEUs (containers) a year. Not only that but this port will leave less of an industrial footprint on the "best place on earth" since all the traffic will move by rail – another recommendation of the BC business Council. Since 53 percent of containers going through Vancouver ports are headed for Eastern Canada and the US, Prince Rupert is a better port for handling this traffic. It is two sailing days closer to Asia and can deliver containers to Eastern destinations much faster. Its detrimental environmental impacts will be far less than those of an expansion at Deltaport, which is situated in the Fraser River Estuary, and on the edge of prime agricultural land.

Whilst we had some debate about future container volumes and port capacity, the Victoria meeting had no disagreement with the many environmental concerns and issues that we raised about expansion at Deltaport. There appeared to be no disagreement from those present with issues about worsening air quality, noise and light pollution, damage to the Roberts Bank ecosystem, endangered orca whales, loss of top quality farmland.

Your stated position of dealing with climate change and taking aggressive action in BC is at odds with the massive increase in emissions that will result from an expanded Deltaport. A threefold increase in container trucks – with the attendant increases in diesel emissions all concentrated on one highway – is in itself enough of an obstacle to render your plans to reduce greenhouse gases as unachievable. What kind of example does this set? How will this look to people like Governor Schwarzenegger? Why not demonstrate to British Columbians that you really do believe in taking an aggressive stand on climate change. Show us all that you can walk the talk.

We therefore call on you to support our position. Say no to any more expansion at Deltaport. Say no to Container Storage on prime farmland. Say no to the BC Rail plans for a seventeen track railyard on Roberts Bank back-up lands. Say no to the South Fraser Perimeter Road – because the Vancouver Port Authority is on record as stating that it is not required if Deltaport does not expand beyond three berths.

We support your climate change initiatives – an expanded Deltaport does not.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Roger Emsley', written in a cursive style.

Roger Emsley
Spokesman, Against Port Expansion on Roberts Bank

cc: Minister Kevin Falcon
Minister Pat Bell
Minister Barry Penner
Minister John Van Dongen
MLA Valerie Roddick