

A resident's frustrated plea for government officials to HELP citizens of Delta:

I read in today's Optimist regarding the fait accompli construction of South Fraser Perimeter Road:

Sounding frustrated, several in attendance asked Taitt whether the port and highway were done deals.

Taitt responded, "That's what we've come down to, our democracy has gone down the tubes. Is there any democracy left?"

A pessimistic audience member noted there doesn't seem to be a groundswell of opposition to port and highway development here because it's not widely publicized, and many people either don't know about it or believe it doesn't affect them.

Taitt said the situation, however, isn't hopeless, as residents here can look to a successful campaign that stopped a large container port proposal at Dibden Bay in England.

Environmentalists there warned the port would increase pollution in the area with disastrous consequences for wildlife, the same message Taitt conveyed in her presentation to the Delta Naturalists.

WE NEED HELP!

I read birth defects are up 40% in China as a direct result of their environmental degradation due to their coal fired generating plants - and now WE are sacrificing our environment to be their 'doormat'? Red flag.

BEI JING, Oct 29 (Reuters) - Birth defects in Chinese infants have soared nearly 40 percent since 2001, a government report said, and officials linked the rise to China's worsening environmental degradation.

The rate of defects had risen from 104.9 per 10,000 births in 2001, to 145.5 in 2006, affecting nearly one in 10 families, China's National Population and Family Planning Commission said in a report on its Web site (www.chinapop.gov.cn). China's coal-rich northern province of Shanxi, a centre of noxious emissions from large-scale coke and chemical industries, had the highest rate of defects, Xinhua news agency said in a report carried by Monday's Beijing News. "The incidence of birth defects is related to environmental pollution," the newspaper quoted An Huanxiao, director of Shanxi's provincial family planning agency, as saying. "The survey's statistics show that birth defects in Shanxi's eight large coal-mining regions are far above the national average," An said. The report said about 2 to 3 million babies are born in China with "visible defects" every year, and a further 8 to 12 million would develop defects within months or years after birth.

The Deltaport now, and as expanded, will have a profoundly adverse effect on the Fraser River salmon. Red flag.

The 1979 Federal Environment Assessment Panel Review for an application for an expanded coal port facility at Roberts Bank said this:

"From the point of view of estuarine ecology, the Panel has concluded that the potential impacts on the Fraser River estuary, of which Roberts Bank is part, are too great to recommend that the port expansion be approved as proposed. The extent and ecological significance of the Fraser River estuary, particularly its use by fish and wildlife, make it unique in North America. A major salmon fishery depends on its preservation as do hundreds of thousands of migratory birds."

Robert Thibeault, the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO), wrote this on July 29, 2003, to the Vancouver Port Authority about plans to expand the port at Roberts Bank: "(DFO) Pacific Regional staff has met with VPA officials on several occasions over the last eight months to discuss this terminal expansion proposal. During these meetings, and in subsequent correspondence, DFO staff has clearly identified the unacceptable impacts to critical fish habitat that would occur with several of the proposed expansion options, specifically the Deltaport Expansion, and Terminal 2 Options #2 and #3."

As I understand it, The Environmental Assessment Act, is essentially in the hands of the premier. The executive director is appointed by cabinet and is, therefore a political appointment under the control of Premier Campbell. The environmental concerns are real and of little interest to Mr. Campbell.

Steve Harper is a true hypocrite on the environment and the egregious acts of his Federal Governments - recall how Harper himself spoke about a previous Federal Government's debacle of thousands of acres of farm land expropriated for that white elephant Mirabel Airport in Quebec - Harper actually said this "It is a pleasure to be among you today in order to correct a historical injustice. On the 27th of March, 1969, the federal government committed a horrible act for the population of St. Scholastique (Mirabel). Ottawa announced that their land was to be expropriated to build the largest airport in the world. Close to 100,000 acres of prime agricultural land would no longer be productive--with no consultation, no consideration, and no choice. It was done in what they labeled the "national interest." It was the era of omnipresent and centralized government. They had big ideas for big projects that cost a lot of money with heavy taxes and heavy debt. But it didn't matter to them. In that era Ottawa took as it pleased. This decision touched thousands of people...families who lost their homes, farmers who lost their living, and a Quebecois community that had worked hard for generations no longer counted. And all this for what? For what? In just a few years it was clear that Montreal did not need an airport of this size."

More wasteful destruction of communities and valuable farm land than linking the nation through useful infrastructure. As most of us are well aware, the expansion of Deltaport and the construction of the SFPR are premised on false assumptions about the economic viability of increased trade with China--and of course there's the myriad environmental, social, and health impacts associated with these projects. Harper hopes one day men or women in his position will make speeches harkening back to his glorious achievement. Instead they will speak of him as he speaks now of the politicians responsible for Mirabel.

To me the parallels of Mirabel with Deltaport expansion and the South Fraser Perimeter Road are absolutely uncanny. What's unfortunate is that while Harper appears to understand the mistakes that were made in Mirabel--offering now to sell unused land back to the farming families who were robbed of it 40 years ago--he's paradoxically leading the charge to build the Mirabel of the West.

Who speaks for Delta and Delta's ecosystem? Certainly NOT Val Roddick. BC Liberal Val Roddick, who pretends to speak for her riding, has been struck dumb by this issue.

Ironically it is John Cummins - but whose voice is drowned out in the name of PROGRESS by his own government. At the North Delta Agricultural Hall in early April, which drew an enormous crowd, Roddick was conspicuous by her absence, those attending included Vicki Huntington, and John Cummins both spoke against the major parts of the Gateway project.

Who can the Delta Citizens turn to for help? This is not for a 'greater good' the 'greater good' is the environment, the eco systems that has supported Delta for centuries. This is a commercial matter that sacrifices the community, its long way of life, its HEALTH, its sensitive ecosystems, its wildlife and its history.

Who benefits? Multinationals and the Ontario Teachers Pension Fund.

The concerned citizens of Delta want leadership from our Delta Council - our life line to governments. Federal and Provincial Governments are ONLY concerned with their money. They have proved themselves complicit with corporate greed and unaccountable to the people of Delta.

We NEED your help - what are YOUR plans to organize and reinvigorate your constituents - we are overwhelmed!

I am ashamed of Premier Campbell. I am ashamed of Steve Harper.

Who will speak for those who can't?

Regards,
Rob Johnson