

**WILL OTTAWA IGNORE ENVIRONMENT CANADA SCIENTISTS AND APPROVE
ROBERTS BANK TERMINAL 2?**

Delta BC February 26 2020

The choice is clear. Let the Vancouver Fraser Port Authority build a second container terminal on Roberts Bank and watch one of the richest and most important ecosystems for migrant and wintering waterbirds in Canada be destroyed. Or protect this important stopover site on the Pacific Flyway by preventing any further port or industrial development on Roberts Bank.

A new peer-reviewed study, by internationally recognized experts in wetland ecology, (now published in *Frontiers in Marine Science* in relation to the importance of biofilm for the breeding migration of Shorebirds) has confirmed what Environment Canada scientists have been saying all along. The ecosystem integrity of Roberts Bank risks being destroyed by further port development.

So, Susan Jones, Boundary Bay Conservation Committee is asking the Environment Minister – “ Are you prepared to destroy one of the most important ecosystems in North America to satisfy the Port Authority?”

Roger Emsley, BC Nature Special Representative for Roberts Bank put in an Access to Information request to the federal government on October 26 2018, because he was aware that there was political interference with the science. “18 months later and I have still not received any material”, he stated. “Now I am being told I will not receive anything until mid April after the Panel report is published”.

Throughout the environmental assessment of the Roberts Bank Terminal 2 Project (RBT2) these Environment Canada scientists have battled the Port Authority’s partisan non-peer reviewed science that has sought to downplay the environmental impacts. The fear has been that the Port Authority’s influence in Ottawa would override Environment Canada concerns.

No longer. This new study, on the importance of biofilm for the breeding migration of shorebirds, validates the work done by Environment Canada scientists. They were right all along. If RBT2 is built it is likely to result in the significant degradation of one of the most important ecosystems, in terms of birds and biodiversity, in the whole of North America. As the scientists have repeatedly said, RBT2 will result in significant adverse environmental effects that cannot be mitigated.

When the Review Panel report is published - expected in a matter of weeks - the Minister of Environment will need to address two questions:

1. Will RBT2 result in significant adverse environmental impacts that cannot be mitigated? Clearly the answer is YES.
2. Is RBT2 in the national interest, sufficient to override the environmental issues that would result if RBT2 were built? That answer is a definite - NO.

Not only is there sufficient container terminal capacity in operation or planned on the West Coast to meet Canada’s trading needs for decades to come (without ever building RBT2), if RBT2 were to go ahead it would be, - by the Port Authority’s own estimates - the most expensive container terminal anywhere in the world. It would be another Mirabel-style debacle (The costly Mirabel Airport white- elephant opened in 1975 and was abandoned in 2004).

Will Environment Minister Wilkinson live up to the government’s commitment to protect internationally recognized wetlands? Or will he bow to the Port Authority’s desire for a new container terminal, even though there is no business case?

The choice is clear. Let’s hope he makes the right one. **Ends**

For more information visit www.againstportexpansion.org

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