



Protect the Planet

Media Advisory

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Six Arrested for Breaching Trans Mountain Injunction to Plead Guilty, Face up to 28 days in Jail

One land defender facing 14 days in jail expects to spend her 80th birthday behind bars

Vancouver, BC (Unceded Coast Salish Territories) – Six land defenders arrested last fall and charged with criminal contempt for breaching the Trans Mountain Pipeline Expansion (TMX) injunction will be sentenced in the BC Supreme Court on Monday, Feb. 14, and Tuesday, Feb. 15, starting at 10am on both days. The land defenders, who are calling themselves the **Brunette River 6**, are facing from 14-28 days in jail. A rally will be held in advance of Monday's sentencing at 9:30am.

The Brunette River 6 are members of a nondenominational, multi-faith prayer circle and are residents of Burnaby and Vancouver who came together to oppose the extensive tree cutting by TMX, as well as stream and urban salmon river degradation caused by the company. Three of the Brunette River 6 are women—Catherine Hembling, 79, Janette McIntosh, 58, and Ruth Walmsley, 61—who will all plead guilty on Monday. They expect to be sentenced and taken into custody the same day. Hembling will likely spend her 80th birthday, on February 23, in jail.

What: Rally and sentencing hearing for The Brunette River 6, facing between 14-28 days in jail

When: Monday, February 14 • Safely-distant rally at 9:30am, Courtroom sentencing at 10am

Where: BC Supreme Court, Nelson and Hornby Street entrance, Vancouver, BC

“As a person of faith, I believe it is my sacred duty to do what I can to leave the world in a condition that will continue to support life as we know it, for present and future generations,” said Ruth Walmsley, one of the Brunette River 6 who is facing jail time. “This means acting immediately to curtail fossil fuel expansion to prevent catastrophic climate change,” continued Walmsley. “Recent deaths in BC alone, due to heat domes, wildfires, and extreme flooding, clearly indicate that we are in a climate emergency.”

On Tuesday, two of the remaining Brunette River 6—Zain Haq, 21, and Bill Winder, 69—will plead guilty, be sentenced, and get taken into custody that day. The sixth—Tim Takaro, 64—will appear on Tuesday, but is not expected to enter a plea at that time. Both Winder and Takaro were arrested during a tree-sit and are facing 21 and 28 days in jail, respectively.

Since the TMX injunction was imposed in March 2018, more than 240 people have been arrested for criminal contempt. Most people were ordered to serve community service hours or pay fines of up to \$3,000, but more than three dozen people have been sentenced to between 4 days and 5 months in jail for taking a peaceful stand against TMX.

In the summer of 2018, the Trudeau government purchased the Trans Mountain pipeline from Texas-based Kinder Morgan for \$4.5 billion. In February 2020, the government announced that the expansion project will cost in excess of \$12.6 billion.

If completed, the TMX pipeline will carry around one million barrels per day of highly toxic, flammable diluted bitumen from the Alberta tar sands to Burnaby. The pipeline will run through residential neighbourhoods, next to schools, through vulnerable salmon-bearing streams, and sensitive ecosystems.

The TMX oil storage Terminal on the side of Burnaby Mountain is being expanded from 13 to 26 tanks. According to a recent [affidavit from the Burnaby fire chief](#), the layout poses numerous potential fire scenarios that would be inextinguishable due to lack of safe firefighting positions. Approximately 240,000 people live within the 5.2 km radius of the dangerous Sulphur Dioxide exposure area, including Simon Fraser University. Yet the evacuation zone offers only a single road, which passes directly by the storage Terminal. Staff and students have been told to shelter in place in case of fire.

“The Trans Mountain pipeline expansion is not only unsafe and bad for our economy, it disrespects the Indigenous people who have not given their consent, and whose land, water, and means of survival is being threatened,” said Bill Winder, another Brunette River 6 defendant facing jail time. “This pipeline represents infrastructure for an outdated energy source, takes us further from our Paris Climate commitments, and must be opposed. Our lives depend on it.”

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Protect the Planet is a coalition opposed to tar sands expansion and the Trans Mountain Expansion pipeline. For more information: stopTMX.ca • facebook.com/StopTMX • [@PPSTMX1](https://twitter.com/PPSTMX1)