



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **Physician, Public Health Expert, SFU Professor, and Tree-Sitter Tim Takaro Sentenced Today to 30 Days in Jail, Taken Into Custody**

***Supporters Question Why Pipeline Opponents Are Criminalized While Extractive  
Industry and Government Avoid Accountability for Climate Crisis***

**xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish) & səḵl̓wətaʔ (Tsleil-  
Waututh) Territories/ Vancouver, BC** – Physician, public health expert, and Simon Fraser  
University health sciences professor emeritus Tim Takaro, 65, was sentenced today to 30 days  
in jail by BC Supreme Court Justice Shelley Fitzpatrick. Takaro was promptly handcuffed and  
taken into custody in a courtroom packed with supporters.

Takaro was arrested in November 2021 while engaged in a tree-sit along the Brunette River in  
Burnaby, protesting construction of the Trans Mountain Pipeline Expansion (TMX) and the  
clear-cutting of trees in the area. Takaro's sentencing hearing was preceded by a press conference  
and lively rally in his support.

Takaro—along with more than 250 people before him—was charged with criminal contempt for  
violating the TMX injunction, imposed in March 2018. Takaro's stiff sentence is part of the  
Crown's strategy to deter him and others from further violating the injunction. Arrests of  
pipeline opponents have slowed since 2018, but started to pick up again in the last year.

“The real climate criminals are the federal and provincial governments for not taking decisive  
action to reduce fossil energy infrastructure and ignoring the urgency of the climate crisis,” said  
Takaro. “The government needs to take the climate crisis seriously to keep people from dying,  
instead of shamelessly going after the people who are fighting to keep our planet healthy and  
safe for generations to come.”

Takaro is part of the Brunette River 6, six land defenders who were all arrested in the Brunette  
River area of Burnaby for defying the TMX injunction. All five of Takaro's co-defendants pleaded  
guilty to criminal contempt in February and were sentenced to between 14 and 21 days in jail.

Another land defender, Errol Povah, 69, is facing 60 days in jail and is scheduled to be sentenced by Justice Fitzpatrick on Thursday, June 16 at 9am. Povah was arrested in the same vicinity as the Brunette River 6 in March 2021 while locking down to heavy equipment, in violation of the TMX injunction, and was convicted of criminal contempt at his trial in January.

The Crown has also been targeting [Indigenous land defenders](#), the latest of which was Tsleil-Waututh member Will George. Although he was never arrested, George was charged with criminal contempt in January 2021 and convicted at trial in October. George was sentenced to 28 days in jail last month, but was released on bail shortly after being taken into custody due to his pending appeal.

“Canada is presenting itself as a leader on climate change and health, but where the rubber meets the road, it is increasing emissions from the Alberta tarsands and jailing one of its foremost climate and health leaders—medical professional and health researcher Dr. Tim Takaro—who is calling for a halt to new fossil fuel infrastructure,” said [Global Climate & Health Alliance](#) director Jeni Miller. “The Trans Mountain Pipeline Expansion is incompatible with a healthy, sustainable future, and jailing those who try to hold governments accountable is incompatible with the democratic principles Canada purports to represent.”

Canadians are dying from climate change caused by increasing greenhouse gas emissions. Last summer and fall, BC was ravaged by wildfires that levelled communities, a heat dome that [killed over 600 people](#), and flooding that threatened livelihoods. Yet, the federal government continues to promote Trans Mountain even with its projected 56 percent increase in tar sands emissions, standing in stark contrast to commitments made by Canada at the Paris Climate Accords.

When government policies do not offer needed protection from climate disasters, civil disobedience becomes the option of last resort to stop new fossil energy projects. Despite efforts to criminalize TMX opponents, in April UN Secretary-General António Guterres called countries that are increasing their production of fossil fuels, like Canada, “[the truly dangerous radicals](#).” In [another statement](#), Guterres said “Some government and business leaders are saying one thing – but doing another. Simply put, they are lying.”

In addition to his MD and Master’s Degrees in Public Health and Toxicology, Takaro has specialty training in occupational and environmental medicine. Takaro has authored numerous national and international reports on the human health impacts of global heating. He was a reviewer for the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and, most recently, he was a lead author on the Health Canada report, *Health of Canadians in a Changing Climate: Advancing our Knowledge for Action*, released in February. Until his retirement in 2020, Takaro also had a clinical practice at Vancouver General Hospital.

“The laws must be changed to fit our times,” continued Takaro. “Parliament has declared a climate emergency, but industry has weaponized the courts to do its bidding, and today’s laws make climate chaos inevitable.”



RCMP's Community-Industry Response Group used a bucket lift to reach Trans Mountain land-defender Dr. Tim Takaro in Burnaby / photo credit Cornelia Naylor, Burnaby Now

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