



August 11, 2022

The Honourable Joyce Murray  
Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard  
House of Commons  
Ottawa ON K1A 0A6

The Honourable Jonathan Wilkinson  
Minister of Natural Resources  
House of Commons  
Ottawa ON K1A 0A6

The Honourable Steven Guilbeault  
Minister of Environment and Climate Change  
House of Commons  
Ottawa ON K1A 0A6

The Honourable Marc Miller  
Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations  
House of Commons  
Ottawa ON K1A 0A6

*Sent Via Email*

Dear Minister Murray, Minister Wilkinson, Minister Guilbeault and Minister Miller,

**Urgent Open Letter re: Evidence of Trans Mountain Pipeline Expansion Harms to Wild Salmon**

We are writing to you to raise very urgent concerns that have been brought to our attention about evidence of harms to wild salmon caused by the construction of the Trans Mountain Pipeline Expansion at work sites where the pipeline crosses the Coquihalla River.

The Coquihalla River is a tributary of the Fraser River and forms a part of the watershed that is essential for resident wild salmon species. For example, the Pacific Salmon Commission reports, as in an August 2, 2022 Vancouver Sun article (<https://vancouversun.com/news/local-news/strong-sockeye-salmon-runs-bode-well-for-famed-fraser-fishery>) that 2022 is expected to be a dominant year in the sockeye salmon's four-year reproductive cycle, meaning that mature fish will be returning to the watershed to spawn. Protecting the millions of salmon expected to spawn in these rivers this year is utterly crucial for the survival of these keystone species, and on-the-ground observers have advised us that there are indications that the Fraser River is experiencing a large and early salmon run.

We understand that the Trans Mountain Expansion project (TMX) received a permit from the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) under the Fisheries Act, **DFO Authorization 19-HPAC-00555**, to begin work near and in-stream of the Coquihalla River between August 1 and August 30, 2022, and that some preparatory work may have been completed at these permitted sites in advance of those dates (i.e., clearing vegetation). A copy of the permit as filed with the Canada Energy Regulator is enclosed.

At the beginning of August, local residents in Hope, BC started noticing that dead fish were appearing at the site where the TMX work was being done.

Local Hope area resident and health science expert Dr. Kate Tairyan began observing the remains of dead fish near the site of TMX Crossing 16 and documented her observations. Two images are enclosed for your information showing the fish remains. We are advised that Dr. Tairyan's family as well as other local residents have been reporting the issue to DFO's 1-800 public reporting line.

We are further advised that Dr. Tairyan was told by a member of Trans Mountain's biologist crew from Triton that the dead fish had already spawned. However, her husband, a retired pathologist, cut open 5 of the dead fish and found eggs inside four of those fish. Dr. Tairyan documented these findings as well.

The DFO permit makes it abundantly clear that the TMX construction period permitted was expected to take place "to occur during a period of lower sensitivity to the life processes of resident and anadromous fish species (e.g., pink salmon, chum salmon, steelhead trout)". However, it appears that the early salmon run means that the works are having a major impact on the fish. The DFO permit lays out numerous conditions to which TMX must adhere to avoid and mitigate impacts to fish and fish habitat. The reports and observations of dead fish by local residents, in this context, are cause for grave alarm.

Ministers, our public opposition to the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion remains steadfast; but, so long as the pipeline remains an asset held by the government in the public trust, we expect transparency, accountability, and regulatory compliance in this undertaking, including every precaution to steward the safe passage of spawning salmon on the Coquihalla River, and all impacted tributaries of the Fraser River. Local residents assert that the dead fish provide clear evidence of Trans Mountain pipeline expansion harms to wild salmon, and that continued work is therefore in breach of their DFO permit.

We share in these concerns. Your government has obligations to steward the health of the Pacific wild salmon populations: as per the *Fisheries Act*, as outlined in the Pacific Salmon Strategy, and in respect of Canada's obligations under the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. We therefore ask that you please act immediately to intervene and halt construction of the TMX pipeline expansion at a minimum until the salmon have spawned and the salmon run is safely complete. The future health of wild Pacific salmon species and Pacific ecosystems, and the human, animal, and plant life they support, may depend on your actions in this.

We thank you in advance for your attention to this matter and will look forward to receiving your response.


Sincerely,



Lisa Marie Barron  
Member of Parliament for Nanaimo-Ladysmith  
NDP Critic for Fisheries, Oceans, and the Canadian Coast Guard



Jenny Kwan  
Member of Parliament for Vancouver East  
NDP Caucus Chair



Peter Julian  
Member of Parliament for New Westminster-Burnaby  
NDP House Leader



Bonita Zarrillo  
Member of Parliament for Port Moody-Coquitlam  
NDP Critic for Infrastructure and Communities

Cc: Canada Energy Regulator

Encl.