



**Press Release, For Immediate Release: Oct. 31, 2022**

### ***Perfect Storm: Spawning Salmon & Trans Mountain Pipeline Expansion***

səlilwətaʔt (Tsleil-Waututh), kwikwəłəm (Kwikwetlem), Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish) and xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam) Nations (Burnaby, BC) - A perfect storm has arrived to Metro Vancouver. Along with the first atmospheric river of the year, Chum salmon returned to spawn in Stoney Creek just as Trans Mountain is proceeding with drilling. A forest defenders' camp along the Burnaby Mountain Urban Trail was set up to monitor, witness and report, while celebrating salmon.

Over several cool, wet and blustery days, citizens has kept watch over the Trans Mountain Expansion (TMX) pipeline in Burnaby. They're camped in tents on the Greenway beside Stoney Creek, with an aerial camp in the trees serving as "watch tower". They are here to keep an eye on TMX, which is proceeding with construction despite the salmon spawning and despite the atmospheric river that's dissolving the freshly deforested hillside. By monitoring and documenting infractions, they intend to hold Trans Mountain accountable.

Lorne Salter, 76, a campaigner with Protect the Planet, has been camping in a tent adjacent to the TMX worksite since Monday Oct 24th. "When I heard things were ramping up here [at Stoney Creek] I had to come, I couldn't stay away." Salter, who lives on Gabriola Island, describes the timing of the salmon run, TMX drilling, and the campers' arrival as fate-like. "Trans Mountain has been here for over a year, getting ready for this work. They started using their massive drill on Wednesday, and the salmon started arriving that same day."

Stoney Creek is considered a miracle in urban stream restoration. Thanks to volunteer stream-keepers, in 2004 salmon returned to the creek after 50 years' absence. It is one of the few urban streams where spawning salmon can be observed up close. It is home to coho (*Oncorhynchus kisutch*) and chum (*O. keta*), as well as threatened or endangered species such as Nooksack dace, steelhead trout, and western brook lamprey.

Khursten Bullock, 35, who has been camped alongside Salter for more than five days, explains: "We've watched huge Chum work their way upstream, through shallow water, up waterfalls. It's miraculous! Yet Trans Mountain doesn't even pause to acknowledge the run. Similarly, our governments fail to acknowledge the conflicts bred by fossil fuel projects."

Bullock has one request: "We want people to come and see what's happening here. Witnessing a live salmon run is amazing, and watching a run beside TMX construction is equally impressive. With so much misinformation circulating online, it's important that people come to see what's going on with their own eyes."

#### **Media Contacts:**

Lorne Salter • 604-352-6463 • [salchootchkin@protonmail.ch](mailto:salchootchkin@protonmail.ch)

Christine Thuring • 604-725-4964 • [cthuring@protonmail.ch](mailto:cthuring@protonmail.ch)

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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](http://stopTMX.ca) • [facebook.com/StopTMX](https://facebook.com/StopTMX) • [@PPSTMX1](https://twitter.com/PPSTMX1)



*This large drill was drilling the bridge over Stoney Creek on the day the salmon arrived.  
Photo credit: Protect the Planet*



*Campers built platforms for their tents, to offset Sunday's atmospheric river. Photo credit:  
Protect the Planet*

## **BACKGROUND**

The estimated \$20 billion pipeline project was purchased for \$4.5 billion from Texas oil giant Kinder Morgan by the federal government in 2018. This creates a conflict of interest for the federal government because the federal government is responsible for regulating pipelines through the Canada Energy Regulator (CER).

Costs on the pipeline have ballooned since the purchase requiring ever greater subsidies from the federal government. Trans Mountain has not provided a cost update since February 2020. This lack of transparency from Trans Mountain is not limited to finances. Trans Mountain's press release about the Thompson River tunnel redrill referred to "technical issues" as the cause of the need to redrill. Trans Mountain claims the Fraser River tunnel problem is due to a "mechanical failure", however the tunneling equipment performed as expected. The Fraser tunnel problem has its origin in the Company's decision to not drill test bores at the crossing and to use HDD contrary to the advice of its experts.

The project is opposed by the Squamish Nation, Tsleil-Waututh Nation and Coldwater Indian Band, who were denied leave to appeal by the Supreme Court of Canada. It also conflicts with Canada's commitment under the Paris Climate Agreement to keep global temperatures from rising above 1.5 degree Celsius. The project crosses 1,300 streams and rivers and would impact numerous drinking water sources along the route, as well as Burnaby Mountain and Simon Fraser University. It would also spell a 7-fold increase in tanker traffic in Burrard Inlet and an increased threat to the endangered Southern Resident Orcas. The Province of British Columbia, the State of Washington, and 20 municipalities oppose the pipeline project, including the Cities of New Westminster and Burnaby.

The existing Trans Mountain pipeline is already a major environmental and public health hazard with a [long history of disastrous spills](#). In June 2020, 50,000 gallons of crude oil [spilled](#) from a pump station located above an aquifer that supplies the Sumas First Nation with drinking water. The thirteen 67-year old tanks at the terminus of the pipeline are too close together to put out in the event of a fire, according to the Burnaby Fire Department. The tank farm expansion makes it more difficult for the Burnaby Fire Department to fight fires, according to [a recent affidavit from the Fire Chief](#). 240,000 people live within the 4.2 km radius of the site that is considered an evacuation zone including 32,000 members of the SFU community.

A [growing number](#) of insurers have pulled out of the pipeline project; those still involved [are facing pressure to divest](#). In November 2020, the Canada Energy Regulator [released a report](#) stating that there is no need for any pipeline expansion if Canada takes measures to curb GHGs. In Sept 2020, [economists warned](#) that the TMX project was no longer financially viable. Indigenous groups, as well as the final report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls have pointed out the connection between resource extraction man-camps and [violence against Indigenous women](#).

The coalition of environmental groups opposing the TMX pipeline includes, but is not limited to, Protect the Planet Stop TMX, Mountain Protectors, Protect the Inlet, Extinction Rebellion Vancouver, STAND.earth, Burnaby Residents Opposing Kinder Morgan Expansion (BROKE), PipePup Network, Climate Convergence, Dogwood, Colony Farms Regional Park, BC Environmental Network, Babies for Climate Justice, Sustainabiliteens Vancouver, 350 Vancouver, 350 SFU, and Wilderness Committee.