

Mayor's Letter to BC Citizens

"USA stops importing Canadian oil and gas"

Dear British Columbia Citizens,

That is not a current headline but it could be. What would happen to our economy if it was?

I would like to talk to you about energy, pipelines and our natural resources. I am a mum and a grandma and I have lived in the north all my life. I am also the Mayor of Fort St. John --- right smack in the middle of one of the world's largest supplies of oil and gas. I live in a region surrounded by pipelines, wells, hydraulic fracturing (fracking) sites and canola and wheat fields. I have eaten the food we grow here and I drink our water. I understand what it takes to extract our natural resources and what it takes to protect our environment. I live it.

I don't want to try to convince you of anything but I would like to share with you what I know to be true. I strongly encourage you to do some of your own research. Learn more than what you read in a tweet or a Facebook post. I have added some links to reliable resources below for you.

Where does the petroleum we all use every day come from? Canada has some of the largest petroleum resources in the world and yet Canada imports 634,000 barrels of crude oil from foreign countries every single day. That is \$26 BILLION of oil imports every year that we could have supplied to ourselves. That product arrives in tankers and is transported t where it needs to go by truck and train right through our communities. And yet we don't want our own product to flow in pipelines to our communities for our own use or tow our ports so we can export it? That just makes no sense at all to me.

So let's talk about pipelines. I know pipelines are a safe, cost-efficient means of oil and natural gas transportation and emit fewer greenhouse gases than alternate transportation methods. Canada has 830,000 kilometers of pipelines. Three million barrels of crude oil is transported safely every single day. B.C. has over 43,000 kilometers of pipelines. if we took that oil out of the pipelines, we would need 4,200 rail cars to move it. How many of those cars would you like rolling through your community? Between 2002 and 2015, 99.9995% of liquid was transported through our pipelines SAFELY. You probably spill more when you fill up at the gas station.

I understand you don't want tankers floating down our beautiful B.C. coast. But did you know the USA has been shipping up to 600,000 barrels a day of crude from Alaska to the Puget Sound through the Salish Sea for the last 20 years? Did you know that B.C. has a Tanker Exclusion Zone that has been respected for years? That zone stipulates that full tankers must travel on the west side of the zone but those that are not transporting goods can stay inside the protective zone. Other than one natural gas pipeline, Vancouver Island receives all of their petroleum by barge every day. I don't remember ever hearing anyone complain about that. According to Transport Canada over 197,000 vessels arrived or departed from west coast ports in 2015-1487 of them were tankers. 400,000 barrels of

crude oil is safely transported off the B.C. coast every single day. Sooo..... I think we are OK there.

Emissions? 80% of the emissions associated with fossil fuels are generated in their combustion -- not their extraction and transportation. If you want to do something about our reliance on fossil fuels then address the demand for them not the transportation of them. Change starts with consumers not industry. A large part of the demand for them not the transportation of them. Change starts with consumers not industry. A large part of the demand for fossil fuels in B.C. is transportation. 33% of our fossil fuels are used to operate cars, trucks, planes, and trains and ferries. If we switched all of that over to electricity we would need not just one Site C dam but 15 of them. Which communities do you want to flood to provide the energy for your electric cars? Remember I live 7 km from Site C dam so I have a pretty good understanding of them.

I love this quote from Blair King an Environmental Scientist and Writer:

"We live in a world where all the work we do to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions in B.C. can be undone with the flick of a pen in China or India. No matter what we do, those developing countries are going to get electrical power to their populations -- if not with LNG, then with coal; and if not with B.C. LNG, then with lower-intensity (read:dirtier) LNG from one of our competitors. In both cases the end result is higher global GHG emissions than if B.C. LNG was used."

He is telling us to look outside our province and see the impact we can have on GHG on our planet. Our LNG is cleaner than the stuff already on the market because our regulations are tougher and we emit far less GHG in our production than in other countries. Our natural gas industry is committed to continuous improvement.

I understand that you are concerned about safety. I am too. In Canada we have some of the strictest safety requirements in the world. Canada's oil and gas producers are continuously improving the safety of their operations and transportation of their products. Emergency Response Plans are customized for each community, covering key areas such as public safety, protection of community infrastructure, and a clear plan of action with local emergency responders. And we have the B.C. Oil and Gas Commission to oversee B.C. projects and the National Energy Board oversees the larger multi-jurisdictional projects.

The Oil and Gas Commission is our provincial agency responsible for regulating oil and gas activities in British Columbia, including exploration, development, pipeline transportation and reclamation. Core responsibilities include reviewing and assessing applications for proposed industry activities, engaging with First Nations, cooperating with partner agencies, and ensuring industry complies with provincial legislation and all regulatory requirements. International delegations come to B.C., as world leaders, to learn how we have partnered environmental protection with resource extraction. I think the Oil and Gas Commission does a good job protecting the interests of citizens.

Many of you have concerns about the rights of our Indigenous Peoples. I will not speak for them but I will provide you with a quote from Stephen Buffalo, president and CEO of the Indian Resource Council:

"I think industry is willing to be a partner (with First Nations). They want to come with the First Nations together. We are depending on these pipelines for the success of the Canadian economy."

Here is the link to the full article: <http://business.financialpost.com/news/energy/pro-oil-first-nations-seek-end-to-pipeline-gridlock?Isa=f499-1f26>

So let's talk about the economy. B.C.'s energy sector offers some of the largest provincial economic opportunities in a generation. It is estimated that, in 2010, 11.2% of the provincial exports came from the natural resource sector. That was over \$21 billion worth. Canada's oil and natural gas sector contributes \$1.5 billion to the provincial government but it is estimated that it could go as high as \$2.4 billion per year. This is money for health care, education and infrastructure. The resource sector is the foundational stone upon which the B.C. economy was built, and it is as important today as ever.

440,000 Canadians are employed because of the oil and gas sector. A recent study by Philip Cross, former chief economic analyst at Statistics Canada, shows the huge economic value of the natural resource industry in B.C., and in particular the Lower Mainland. Cross' report demonstrates that over 55 percent of resource-related jobs and income (direct, indirect and induced) flow to the Lower Mainland. This means those workers contribute to our economy by renting or buying homes, buying groceries, enjoying a quality life and shopping their local businesses.

Let's lead the world in resource extraction, continuous improvements and long term planning.

Let's be leaders in reliable and renewable energy development.

Let's support Canadian industry and stop buying foreign oil.

Let's grow our economy by meeting our domestic needs and exporting our abundant resources.

Let's live well now and in the future.

Thank you for taking the time to be an informed citizen.

Sincerely,

Lori Ackerman,
Mayor of the City of Fort St. John

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From Brainy Quotes:

Be not simply good - be good for something.

Henry David Thoreau