



September 18, 2026

Hon. Dominic LeBlanc
Minister of Internal Trade of Canada, and President of the King's Privy Council for Canada
125 Sussex Drive
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0G2

Sent via email to WCOPComment-CommentaireOCO@mpo-bgp.gc.ca.

Re: Comment on the Major Project designation of the West Coast Oil Pipeline under the *Building Canada Act*

Dear Minister LeBlanc,

On behalf of the Victoria City Council, I write today to provide comments for consideration in the deliberations related to the Major Project designation of the West Coast Oil Pipeline. Enclosed, you will find our submission.

On September 3, Council passed the following motion as a matter of urgency:

That Council:

- 1) *Request the Mayor provide a submission to the Project of National Interest consultation process opposing the construction of a new West Coast Pipeline, as well as its designation as a Project of National Interest, including the following points:*
 - a. *As Victorians watch our friends and family across the country suffer from wildfires and wildfire smoke, we also worry about our own safety from future climate disasters.*
 - b. *Climate disasters are caused by climate breakdown.*
 - c. *Climate breakdown is accelerated by the extraction and burning of fossil fuels.*
 - d. *The only responsible course of action for leaders in our country is to transition away from fossil fuels as a source of energy.*
 - e. *The proposed West Coast Pipeline, and its potential designation as a Project of National Interest, is a failure of climate leadership. It consigns Victorians, our friends and family across the continent, and future generations to choking wildfire smoke and floods from atmospheric rivers.*
 - f. *The shipping of an additional million barrels of oil per day through the Salish Sea will increase the likelihood of an oil spill that could decimate Victoria's coastal economy and way of life.*

"The City of Victoria recognizes the Songhees and Xwsepsum Nations in whose traditional territories we live and work "Hay swx qa"



- g. *The noise and pollution of increased oil tanker traffic threatens the endangered Southern Resident Killer Whales. The eventual destruction of these iconic animals would be an unmeasurable tragedy for our City as a coastal community.*
 - h. *Building the West Coast Pipeline is counter to the values and wellbeing of the residents of the City, and the City of Victoria formally opposes the pipeline's designation as a Project of National Interest.*
- 2) *Publicly issue the Mayor's submission.*

I will emphasize that as the capital city of British Columbia and Canada's most westerly capital city, protection and preservation of the Salish Sea, which surrounds our island, is integral to the economy of our city and the wellbeing of our residents. The continued expansion of fossil fuel infrastructure jeopardizes the health and quality of life for Victorians, as well as residents across the country, as we face worsening climate related disasters. Additionally, the increased risk of oil spills could have catastrophic impacts on our coast.

Under the *Building Canada Act*, the factors for Major Project designation that the Governor in Council may consider include the extent to which the project can "advance the interests of Indigenous peoples" and "contribute to clean growth and to meeting Canada's objectives with respect to climate change." Under both factors, we urge you to decline Major Project designation for the West Coast Oil Pipeline and allow for thorough and comprehensive analysis and approvals that are consistent with for other projects of similar nature.

Sincerely,

Marianne Alto
Victoria Mayor

cc: Will Greaves, MP for Victoria

"The City of Victoria recognizes the Songhees and Xwsepsum Nations in whose traditional territories we live and work "Hay swx qa"

Submission



DATE	September 18, 2026
TO	Minister Dominic LeBlanc and the Major Projects Office
FROM	City of Victoria
DEPARTMENT	Mayor's Office
CC	Will Greaves, MP for Victoria
SUBJECT	Submission on the designation of the West Coast Oil Pipeline as a project of National Interest

Summary

The City of Victoria opposes the construction of the proposed West Coast Pipeline and its designation as a project of National Interest. This submission is made at the September 3rd, 2026 direction of Victoria City Council. The City is concerned that increased oil tanker traffic through the Salish Sea would heighten the risk of a damaging oil spill and further threaten the endangered Southern Resident Killer Whales. The City is also concerned that expanding fossil fuel infrastructure is incompatible with the urgent need to address climate change and the transition to cleaner energy sources, and poses a risk to the wellbeing of residents. Victoria submits that the project is contrary to the City's climate and environmental priorities and that the designation as a project of National Interest does not serve the long-term interests of residents, coastal communities, or future generations.

Discussion

Across Canada, communities continue to experience the growing effects of climate change through increasingly severe wildfires, wildfire smoke, heat events, flooding, drought, and atmospheric rivers. Victorians have watched friends, family, and communities across the country endure evacuation, displacement, health impacts, and economic losses resulting from these climate-driven disasters. Residents of Victoria also face growing risks from climate-related emergencies and understand that these impacts will continue to intensify without meaningful action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Climate disasters are a consequence of climate breakdown. Climate breakdown is accelerated by the continued extraction, transportation, and combustion of fossil fuels. In light of this reality, governments have a responsibility to support the rapid transition away from fossil fuels and toward cleaner, more sustainable sources of energy.

The proposed West Coast Pipeline represents a significant expansion of fossil fuel infrastructure at a time when scientific evidence and climate commitments point to the need for a different course.

The City of Victoria is located on the homelands of the Songhees Nation and the Xwsepsum Nation.

Designating the project as a Project of National Interest would signal support for continued long-term dependence on fossil fuels and would be inconsistent with the urgent climate action required to safeguard communities across Canada.

The City of Victoria is also concerned about the local and regional impacts associated with the proposal. The shipment of an additional one million barrels of oil per day through the Salish Sea would increase marine tanker traffic and the associated risk of an oil spill. Such an event would have devastating consequences for coastal ecosystems, marine wildlife, Indigenous cultural connections, tourism, recreation, and the coastal economy that supports residents throughout the region.

Increased tanker traffic would also pose further risks to the endangered Southern Resident Killer Whale population. These animals already face significant pressures from underwater noise, vessel disturbance, and pollution. Additional oil tanker traffic through the Salish Sea would exacerbate those threats and further jeopardize the recovery of a species that is deeply connected to the identity, ecology, and heritage of coastal communities. The loss of these iconic animals would be an immeasurable tragedy.

The City of Victoria has established ambitious climate and environmental objectives that reflect the values of its residents. Community members consistently affirm the importance of taking meaningful action on climate change, protecting biodiversity, and supporting a sustainable future. The proposed West Coast Pipeline is fundamentally at odds with those objectives and values.

Designating the project as a project of National Interest limits the thoroughness of the review process, and jeopardizes the ability for interested parties, including First Nations, to comment on the project. Its designation undermines Canada's rigorous environmental standards and permitting processes.

Conclusion

For these reasons, the City of Victoria formally opposes the designation of the proposed West Coast Pipeline as a Project of National Interest and urges the Government of Canada to prioritize projects and investments that advance climate resilience, environmental protection, clean energy, and long-term community wellbeing.

The City of Victoria respectfully submits that the proposed West Coast Pipeline does not meet the environmental, climate, or public-interest considerations required to justify designation as a Project of National Interest and should not proceed under that designation.