



October 20, 2021

An Open Letter from BC Nature to our provincial and federal representatives.

BC Nature, a federation of more than 50 naturalists' clubs with more than 6000 members throughout BC, emphasizes that the natural health and wealth of the Fraser River and its estuary is important to all of BC; indeed, to all of Canada. Yet the lower Fraser, from Hope to the river delta, has already lost more than 70 percent of its natural habitat, and is now under further threat from environmental degradation as a result of projects such as Roberts Bank Terminal 2.

In the recent article *Black Swan Summer: Tipping Climate and Biodiversity Destruction*, in the Bulletin of the Canadian Society of Environmental Biologists (Fall 2021:73:3), Loys Maignon described the summer of 2021 as a "Black Swan Summer". What is a Black Swan? It is the occurrence of an unpredictable event characterized by its rarity and severe and often devastating impact; an event that in hindsight should have been predictable.

In the Black Swan Summer of 2021, an unprecedented drought swept Western North America with record temperatures that killed humans and plants and animals alike, set towns ablaze, and caused billions of dollars in damages. The marine environment suffered as heavily as the terrestrial environment. Climate change manifested itself with a punctuation mark. Yet despite all the talk of sustainability, we continue to promote an economy of endless growth while still claiming that we can also retain a healthy environment.

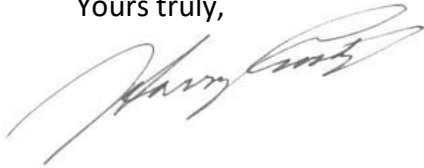
Such Black Swan events are becoming increasingly common; it is beyond time to expose the lie of the concept of endless growth with its disregard for the environment. BC's Fraser River Estuary is a poignant example; one in need of urgent action to maintain ecosystem integrity.

The Estuary simply cannot withstand any more industrial or port development, but this is exactly what the Port of Vancouver plans to do with the addition of a second container terminal in the estuary: Roberts Bank Terminal 2. The cities of Delta, Richmond and White Rock have expressed their opposition to this development to the Prime Minister. Over 40 environmental and other groups oppose this expansion. Scientists from Environment Canada and universities, experts in wetlands and wetland functions, have voiced their deep concern. Complex systems such as the Fraser River Estuary, while resilient, can reach tipping points that precipitate steep ecosystem function declines.

Were this additional terminal to be approved the Roberts Bank ecosystem would face significant adverse environmental effects. Environment Canada scientists have stated repeatedly that if this project were to go ahead its negative effects will be immediate, continuous, irreversible and unable to be mitigated. The Port of Vancouver management continues to push forward despite these concerns. Not only would this be the most expensive container terminal ever built anywhere in the world, but it is not needed. The consequences of a Fraser River Estuary reaching its tipping point would be calamitous.

Roberts Bank Terminal 2 would result in major, immitigable, adverse environmental effects. The precious natural habitat and the wildlife that relies upon it requires defending. Environment and Climate Change Canada and the Governor in Council (cabinet) will soon be required to make a decision on this project. We call upon the Canadian Government to deny approval for an unjustifiable project and protect our future. We seek to enlist your voice in opposition.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Harry Crosby", written in a cursive style.

Harry Crosby  
President, BC Nature