The news is awash with attempts to prop up the National Energy Board’s recommendation in favour of Kinder Morgan’s Trans Mountain Pipeline, issued May 19. Thorough, comprehensive, rigorous; and if that’s not enough, over 500 pages long! No fewer than 157 conditions attached. Every attempt is made to characterize the process as robust, the result as considered, balanced, even onerous in the conditions it imposes on Kinder Morgan. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Living Oceans retained highly credentialed experts in the fields of environmental and human health impact assessment to review the project proposal and they were scathing in their comment on the quality of the science offered up in support of the project. In many respects, it failed to meet basic professional standards. Yet time and again, reviewing the criticism of Kinder Morgan’s evidence, the NEB said, ‘it met our standards; it’s good enough for us’.

That leads us to the conclusion that the NEB’s guidelines for project review urgently require an overhaul. It also points up the incongruity of asking a specialized energy industry regulator to be the so-called ‘expert’ evaluator of environmental and human health effects of a major energy project, or to carry the responsibility of consultation with First Nations. These are matters that require expertise and detachment that the NEB simply cannot lay claim to. It is, and arguably was always intended to be, a facilitator of major energy projects.

Cabinet plans to test how hot the political waters will be, if they approve this pipeline, by holding public meetings from now until the fall. It is extremely important that they hear from you, either online or at a meeting; otherwise, they will conclude that they can approve the pipeline without significant negative fallout. Pledge to speak up at http://www.forthecoast.ca/ and we’ll pledge in return to let you know when and where.

cont. on page 5...
Tanker Moratorium: to be, or not to be?

I remember how we all marveled when the second Prime Minister Trudeau swept into power, and like the proverbial new broom, started cleaning house. One of his earliest moves was to let the light shine in on his letters of instruction to government ministers—the so-called ‘mandate letters’, issued by every Prime Minister to his cabinet, had never in Canadian history been made public. I was delighted to see a longstanding campaign of ours, for a moratorium on tanker traffic on the North Coast, in Transport Minister Garneau’s marching orders.

Did I read too much into it? I could have sworn it said, “Formalize a moratorium on crude oil tanker traffic on British Columbia’s North Coast”. “Formalize”, because the moratorium has existed as an executive order since the days of the former Prime Minister Trudeau, albeit denied by the Harper Conservative government as it proceeded to approve Northern Gateway. I thought the idea was to make it clear to the shipping industry that these waters are too dangerous and our North Coast resources too precious to sustain bulk shipment of crude oil.

I was accordingly some surprised, when I attended the “Pre-engagement consultation” with Transport Canada, to find that industry players didn’t think we were there to talk about how big, how long and what kinds of oil, but rather, whether or not the whole concept of a moratorium was based in science.

I’m getting really tired of hearing the same, lame claim that shipping has become so safe there’s virtually no risk to taking a supertanker of toxic cargo anywhere on the planet. Sure, if you add up every nautical mile traveled by every supertanker everywhere and divide by spills, you get not much. What that’s got to do with transiting Hecate Strait and Dixon Entrance, I don’t know.

Oil tankers currently in service are designed to withstand the wave environment of the North Atlantic, where the odds are low that a wave will exceed 12 meters in height. On B.C.’s North Coast, winter storms will frequently see wave heights of 20 meters; stormy, confused seas have produced waves even higher. Tankers operating in this region would be regularly relying on what should be safety margins in their design, with unknown consequences.

Over the 25-year life of a tanker, experts say it will encounter over 100 million waves. That represents a lot of stress on a vessel that may be operating at or beyond its design parameters. I don’t want to see that play out in a spill on our North Coast, so I will be continuing to work with Transport Canada to ensure that the moratorium is properly crafted and enshrined in legislation this time.

Sincerely,

Karen Wristen,
Executive Director
Despite our request that they hold off until our court case is decided, Health Canada has proceeded to approve genetically modified salmon—the world’s first GM food animal—for consumption in Canada. And it won’t be labeled as a GM food, so you won’t even know if you’re getting it.

Seventy-nine grocery store chains operating 11,105 storefronts across North America have already made vows not to sell GM products, even though they’re approved by the health authorities in both the U.S. and Canada. Legal action is pending in both countries: the US action seeks to push back against the consumption approval and our lawsuit, filed by Ecojustice on behalf of Living Oceans and Ecology Action Centre targets the permits to manufacture the fish eggs here in Canada. Our case is expected to proceed to appeal this fall.

Meantime, the product has yet to enter the Canadian market so far as we know. Aquabounty, the manufacturer, plans to create eyed fish eggs here in Canada, export them to Panama for growout and then import the fish for domestic sale. Because no labeling of seafoods as to origin or species is required in Canada, it will be very difficult to tell when the product arrives.

Consumers looking for Atlantic salmon in B.C. are advised to look for the “Kuterra” brand, from a land-based farm owned by Namgis First Nation, near Port McNeill. Their product is available from Safeway stores, our SeaChoice retail partner, and it is proudly labeled. •
For over a decade, we have pressed for robust and science-based certifications that push the salmon farming industry to improve unsustainable practices. Today, Living Oceans’ Kelly Roebuck is alarmed by what she’s seeing, as B.C. farms press forward with applications for Aquaculture Stewardship Certification.

“The first thing that seemed to be going wrong was that the abundance of sea lice was suddenly off the charts,” said Kelly. “That could be a function of environmental conditions, although we’d never seen these kinds of levels before; but when we looked closer, it seemed quite likely that lice levels had more to do with a change in farm management practices as they try to meet certification standards.”

The ASC Salmon Standard judges salmon farms on their use of pesticides and therapeutants to control lice, scoring them using a formula weighted for the types of damage that these chemicals can cause in ocean ecosystems. Keeping the score low is one key step in the certification process.

“What appears to be happening is that farms in the certification process are not treating for sea lice during the winter, when research indicates it can be most effective,” Kelly explained. “Instead, they’re rolling the dice on whether or not they’ll see an infestation, holding off on treatment until lice numbers are far beyond the management trigger (3 motile lice per fish) set by Canadian regulators. It looks like they left it so late that by the time they did finally treat in the spring, they were unable to bring lice under control.”

Most recently, Marine Harvest’s Monday Rock farm reported an extremely high sea lice count of 19.68 only two days before their ASC certification was granted. The ASC lice management standard is 0.1 female lice per fish, but the certification body appears to have granted Variance Requests from B.C. salmon farmers who claim that level can’t be met in our waters, referring to the Pacific Aquaculture Regulations instead. The Regulations require farms over the 3 lice trigger level to apply action within 15 days during the sensitive wild salmon outmigration period. At Monday Rock, there was a delay of 50 days before treatment was undertaken in 2015; thus the farm had failed to meet both the ASC standard and Canadian regulations.

When chemical treatment fails, the next management option is to harvest fish. But any fish harvested before the certification is granted can’t be sold into the ASC chain of custody system that offers access to sustainable seafood markets, so the incentive is to leave the fish in the water despite the burgeoning lice numbers and the threat they pose to wild juvenile salmon out-migrating during the spring months. “In Quatsino Sound, we saw owner Marine Harvest depopulating a nearby farm that was not in the cont. on page 5...
Salmon Farming cont. from page 4
certification process, rather than take the more heavily infected fish out of the water,” said Kelly. “Consequently, lice numbers at Monday Rock continued to climb, in contravention of both regulations and the conditions of licence. And yet today, it’s certified.”

Living Oceans continues to follow applications for certification closely, reviewing and commenting on individual farm audits as well as ongoing projects of ASC designed to revise its standards. Our concern is that pressure to lower the bar is relentless and threatens to make the certification itself meaningless. “If standards are set such that over 80% of farms worldwide are actually meeting it, there is no encouragement to improve practices and no point to certification,” said Kelly.

...cont. from cover

Ignoring the fact that once dilbit spills, no technology on the market today can clean it up, the Board nevertheless declared the risk of the devastating pollution that will cause to be “acceptable” in view of the “considerable” economic benefits that it thinks Canada will derive from the pipeline.

Perhaps worst of all, the recommendation reads as if the Species at Risk Act didn’t apply at all to the NEB’s deliberations—Southern Resident Killer Whales will be “significantly, adversely impacted”, the text says; but that’s not all on Kinder Morgan’s account and so, the project should be approved. These whales are a protected species and we maintain that nobody—not the NEB and not the Cabinet—has the authority to decide to harm them further.

The Trans Mountain Pipeline still faces a wall of opposition from First Nations and communities throughout B.C. (see http://www.forthecoast.ca/voices/ for a map). The federal government has tried to supplement the NEB process with a greenhouse gas emissions assessment for the upstream (tarsands) impacts and a consultative process set to work with First Nations and communities from now until the fall. The federal Cabinet makes the final decision in December of 2016.

Tell the federal government: You can’t protect fish without protecting habitat.

The federal Fisheries Act, enacted almost 150 years ago, is one of the oldest pieces of environmental legislation in Canada. Until 2012, this legislation empowered the federal government to protect oceans, clean water and fish habitat. When the federal government passed omnibus Bill C-38, it cut a number of pieces of environmental legislation including weakening fish habitat protection. This change was made without public participation, respect for Indigenous rights and title, or scientific evidence.

Quite simply, you can’t protect fish without protecting habitat.

Fortunately, the Fisheries Minister’s mandate letter instructs him to “restore lost protections and introduce modern safeguards” into the Fisheries Act. But we haven’t seen real action yet.

This is why we’re calling on the Fisheries Minister and the Canadian government to amend the Act immediately to reinstate strong fish habitat protection and move forward with engagement on other changes needed to enhance stewardship and ensure the long-term sustainability of Canada’s vibrant aquatic ecosystems.

Please join Canadians across the country in supporting this call.
Sign the petition at http://fisheriesact.ca/take-action
Our marine debris program kicks off its most ambitious season yet, with Project Manager Rob O’Dea at the helm. Plans are laid for the largest marine debris cleanup Canada has ever seen, with six or more groups co-operating in the effort to remove an anticipated 30-40 tonnes of plastic debris from sensitive habitat on Vancouver Island’s western shores.

“Debris transport was our biggest cost in years past,” said Rob. “This year, rather than having each group spending money to truck debris to landfills, everyone will share in the services of a tug and barge.” The barge will be loaded by helicopter, allowing the groups doing cleanup to leave debris caches on the beaches rather than spending time and money transporting them. “Moving bulky debris by land is far more expensive than by sea; and once loaded, we can bring the barge to the Lower Mainland where plastics can be repurposed, rather than landfilled,” Rob explains. “I am so looking forward to

Young Entrepreneurs help Clear the Coast

Solving the crisis of plastic marine debris is one of the first things young people often mention these days, when they’re asked about important environmental issues. We were very pleased, but not at all surprised, to hear from some young business people that they wanted to partner with Living Oceans to co-promote sustainable products and our Clear the Coast campaign. Each has promised a portion of sales revenue to help our efforts to remove marine debris from the remote and spectacular beaches of Vancouver Island’s northwest coast.

Lifestyle over Luxury is a sustainable clothing brand that makes travel gear for the modern day adventurer. Their clothes are tough, comfy, moisture-wicking, anti-wrinkle and affordable. Completely Canadian-made from bamboo and organic cotton, these are threads with a mission: one dollar from every sale helps Clear the Coast.

Eko co. is a simple, natural, DIY company that is dedicated to removing plastic from the oceans while helping homes stay green and chemical-free. They provide easy to use DIY cleaning kits so that you can know the ingredients that are being introduced into your homes and ensure that your family and home stays green clean! Eko co. has committed one dollar from every transaction on its website to Clear the Coast.

And last year, Seaflora Skincare celebrated World Oceans Day by donating 10% of all online sales during the period of June 5, 6, 7 & 8th; we’re pleased to learn they’d like to do the same again this year! Seaflora, as the name implies, works with wild ocean resources to design and manufacture creative seaweed skincare and spa treatments that surpass all marine skincare products on the market.
Climate Consultations coming to B.C. this Summer

The federal government has begun consulting Canadians on a plan to address climate change—and they’ve been getting an earful! Meeting rooms in Ontario and Quebec have overflowed with participants, causing Environment and Climate Change Minister Catherine McKenna to book extra meetings.

The consultations are being held as ‘town hall’ meetings with an opportunity for participants to workshop solutions in small groups as well as hear from the Minister. You can call your MP to find out where and when you can attend one of these meetings, or participate online at http://letstalkclimateaction.ca/index.php?lang=en

Sea to Fork Makes Eating Local Even Easier

Connecting Metro Vancouver seafood lovers to the most sustainable, locally caught seafood has been our goal for the Sea to Fork project for several years. This year, under the guidance of Claude Tremblay, we’re making it easier than ever for people to find the rich resources of our coast with a new web-based tool.

“The Sea to Fork Hub will allow consumers to find the fish they’re looking for at the retail outlet or at the dock,” says Claude. “And for fishermen, the Hub will offer a way to notify buyers—whether they’re individuals, retailers or restaurants—that a catch is available for sale.”

The Hub has both a public and a private portal. The public portal allows consumers to search for a fish by type or location of retail outlet, while the private side of the portal allows member fishermen and buyers to transact business. “The Hub provides the ultimate in traceability of seafood,” said Claude. “No matter which portal you’re working through, you’ll know who caught the fish you’re buying and where they caught it, and our interactive map will show that to you.”

With so many chefs and consumers taking up the cause of seafood sustainability, we felt it was time to provide easier access for locally caught fish to enter the local market. “So much of what’s caught here in B.C. waters ends up being exported, while some 85% of the seafood in our stores is imported,” Claude explains. “We wanted to make it easier for fishermen who follow sustainable practices to find their markets here at home.”

The Sea to Fork Hub is in beta testing now and should be available to consumers within the next couple of months. •
Over the past few months we’ve said some fond farewells as several longtime and much-appreciated staff members moved on to other pursuits. Geoff Gilliard was our intrepid Communications Manager for 10 years, bringing his invaluable passion, clarity, and humour to our publications, offices, and lives. Working as our Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Analyst for 8 years, Carrie Robb’s excellent analytic abilities and wealth of knowledge of marine ecosystems were made evident in her maps that play crucial and ongoing roles in protecting our oceans. And Jenna Stoner seemed to contribute a lifetime’s worth of dedication and expertise in the 2.5 years she worked as our Sustainable Seafood Campaign Manager, building crucial bridges and raising awareness throughout the seafood supply chain. We will miss all three of these fantastic staff members and wish them much luck on their next adventures!

We are delighted to welcome back Kelly Roebuck to the Sustainable Seafood team. Kelly left us in anticipation of the birth of daughter Sequoia, who is now old enough to permit a virtual return to work from their home in Tasmania. Joining Kelly on the team is Claude Tremblay, another familiar face who volunteered for over a year to translate our entire website into French, before leaving to undertake his Master’s degree in Strategic Leadership toward Sustainability, at Blekinge Institute of Technology. Rob O’Dea (who will be known to many in Vancouver for his extensive volunteer work with non-profits, including the East Vancouver Culture Crawl) is taking on the leadership of our most logistically demanding project, as Project Manager for Clear the Coast.

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Ways to Donate

1. **Donate directly** to Living Oceans, if you do not require a tax receipt.
   - **By cheque**: Please make cheque payable to Living Oceans Society and mail to: Living Oceans Society Box 320 Sointula, BC V0N 3E0

2. **Donate to the Canadian Coastal Research Society** if you would like a tax receipt (minimum $25).
   - **By cheque or credit card**: please fill out this form. Cheques must be payable to CANADIAN COASTAL RESEARCH SOCIETY. Please note if you would like to make a one time or monthly donation. Monthly donors will receive annual tax receipts.

3. **Online**: You can donate directly to Living Oceans or to the Canadian Coastal Research Society using your credit card or Paypal on our web site.

   Canadian Coastal Research Society is a registered Canadian charity, no. 82128 1433 RR0001. Canadian Coastal Research Society and Living Oceans collaborate on charitable projects. You will be directed to the Canadian Coastal Research Society web site if you want to make a charitable donation.

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Thank you for supporting the work of Living Oceans Society. A charitable tax receipt will be sent to you for donations of $25 or more.

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