

SPECIAL FEATURE

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ICBA calls on Ottawa to reject B.C. attempt to stall pipeline

PETER CAULFIELD
CORRESPONDENT

Chris Gardner, president of the Independent Contractors and Businesses Association of British Columbia (ICBA), says he is fed up waiting for construction to begin on the controversial Alberta-to-BC Kinder Morgan Trans Mountain pipeline.

"It's time to get to work on this project," said Gardner. "This pipeline is in the national interest, which is why the federal cabinet approved it in the first place."

Gardner says all of the issues raised by George Heyman, BC's Minister of Environment and Climate Change, have been already addressed in the 29-month-long Trans Mountain approval process by the Liberal federal government and endorsed by the provincial government.

"This is simply a stalling tactic meant to flout the federal government's jurisdiction," said Gardner. "It's time for Prime Minister Trudeau to act."

Gardner's call to arms was in response to the BC government's recent announcement that it has formed a committee to look at environmental impacts of pipelines.

The ICBA says that ground was already covered during the Trans Mountain approval process, and after millions of tax dollars have been invested in spill response.

ICBA recently added some rhetorical arrows to its quiver when it launched an email campaign through its Get2Yes web platform to move Trans Mountain along.

"The campaign started in early February and has already generated more than 2,000 emails in support of the pipeline to the BC government," said Jordan Bateman, ICBA director of communications.

Bateman says the ICBA plans to continue the campaign "until it's successful."

"Sometimes politicians change their minds," he said. "There's always hope."

The ICBA also sent an open letter in support of the pipeline to Premier John Horgan.

Signatories to the letter, in addition to the ICBA, were The Canadian Federation of Independent Business, Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters, the Business Council of British Columbia and the BC Chamber of Commerce.

Also in support of the Trans Mountain pipeline extension is the Progressive Contractors Association of Canada (PCA).

"Canada's energy producers already adhere to the highest safety and environmental standards," said Rieghardt van Enter, PCA regional director for British Columbia. "Pipelines are critical to Canada's energy development and economy. Thwarting the transportation of Western Canada's oil to global energy markets is not in the best interests of British Columbians or Canadians."

van Enter says the PCA has spoken to all of the parties in the dispute.

"We have talked to federal Minister of Natural Resources Jim Carr twice — he was positive about getting the pipeline build — to the Alberta government, and, indirectly, to the BC government."

It is unclear how or when the stand-off will be resolved.

After BC called for further review of the oil-spill risk from the pipeline expansion, the Alberta government retaliated by boycotting all imports of wines from British Columbia.

The latest move in this political chess game, as of late February, has BC taking the wine boycott to the Canadian Free Trade Agreement.

The trade agreement allows for penalties of up to \$10-million, but the BC government says there would first be a 120-day period — four months — for talks between the two provinces before the dispute escalates to a tribunal hearing.

UBC political science professor Kathryn Harrison says neither Alberta, BC nor Ottawa is in a great bargaining position.

"Alberta wants a pipeline, but can't make it happen on their own," she said. "BC will have an uphill battle in court, though there's nothing for Trans Mountain or Alberta or the federal government to challenge yet. The federal government has approved the pipeline and will be in a strong position if and when the constitutional question arises in court, but whatever they do is going to alienate voters in one region or the other, which is not a great position for any federal politician to be in."

UBC business professor Werner Antweiler says the provincial government is trying to balance competing interests within the party and with the Green Party, its partner in government.

"Opposition to the pipeline is concentrated in Burnaby [pipeline terminal and Vancouver suburb]," said Antweiler. "It's the young environmentalists in Burnaby versus employment-minded unions. There are a number of provincial constituencies in Burnaby that are in play, so the NDP needs to be careful. After the decision to proceed on the Site C dam, the government feels it owes something to the environmental faction in the NDP."

Nick Martin, a policy analyst with the Canada West Foundation, says the federal government needs to assert its authority.

"If project opponents successfully impose more prolonged uncertainty and even block this federally approved, in-the-national-interest project, then investors... will look even more unfavourably on Canada, which will only harm us economically," Martin said.

Construction Foundation aims to help future workers get driver's licenses

PETER KENTER
CORRESPONDENT

The British Columbia construction workforce requires new recruits. A new program, The Shift, aims to help identify them among more than 1,000 young people who transition out of care in the province each year and begin their training for

construction work—including helping them obtain a driver's license.

"While in care, these young people are part of a supported environment, but when they become adults, they may lose their entire support system," says Abigail Fulton, executive director of the Construction Foundation of B.C.

"Our program aims to connect with youth



CONSTRUCTION FOUNDATION OF B.C.

The Construction Foundation of B.C.'s newest effort is a program called Shift which teaches prospective construction workers how to drive.

before and after their transition out of care to help them develop skills and abilities that will lead to a future in the construction industry."

The foundation, which grew out of the B.C. Construction Association, has flexed plenty of charitable muscle in recent years. Its first initiative, Project Shop Class, has already raised and distributed more than \$3 million in grants, to buy up-to-date tools and equipment for school shops.

"We've had a growing presence in the kindergarten to Grade 12 system," says Fulton.

"That's the area where we're concentrating our charitable efforts, so that we can help support not only the next generation of construction workers, but help students to become employable and connect with all sorts of industries before they leave school."

The Shift helps youth transitioning out of care to qualify for a job, so that they can begin an apprenticeship in any of the skilled construction trades.

"If you have the skills to get that first job, you can earn money while in apprenticeship," says Fulton. "For kids leaving care, an opportunity to make money while going to school is particularly advantageous."

The Shift will focus on achievements students can put on their resume before they leave school, using the charity's online FutureBuilder tool as a guide. These include earning safety certificates as well as developing important business skills, such as crafting

a solid resume and application letter.

However, after the charity canvassed its "catalysts"—program supporters who work in high schools, but also provide a bridge to the construction industry—a driver's license was identified as one of the most important items an applicant required to succeed. The Shift program begins with that goal.

While attaining a driver's license was once considered a prime pursuit among high school students, a cultural shift has seen younger Canadians taking less interest in owning or driving a car.

"If you're going into the trades, you'd better have a way to get to a project, and often public transit or car hire apps aren't going to get you there," says Fulton. "Many companies also require workers to use company vehicles. Simply showing up for your interview with a driver's license is indicative of some effort on the part of the applicant."

In part funded by grant money from charitable organization the Victoria Foundation, The Shift is partnering with a driver's training school to help participants earn their licenses.

"We have other construction association partners that we're working with to help them further develop construction skills," says Fulton.

"Hopefully we will then help them get their first jobs. Even after a student continues into apprenticeship, we plan for The Shift team to continue to provide mentorship and funding support for tuition if it's needed."

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The BCCSA has developed the Silica Control Tool as a resource for the construction industry in BC. The Tool assists employers in conducting appropriate risk assessments and implementing effective controls and safe work practices where RCS dust may be an occupational hazard. The Tool identifies processes that may lead to exposures over the allowable exposure control limit, provides information about how to bring the exposure within the allowable limit, and produces a corresponding Exposure Control Plan (ECP) for the user.

WHAT DOES IT DO?

The Tool guides the user step-by-step for each of their identified RCS dust producing processes through:

- Assessment of the risk from exposure
- Identification of the expected exposure
- Suggestions for appropriate controls
- Identification of expected exposure with the controls
- Any PPE that may be required
- Production of components of a related Exposure Control Plan (ECP)

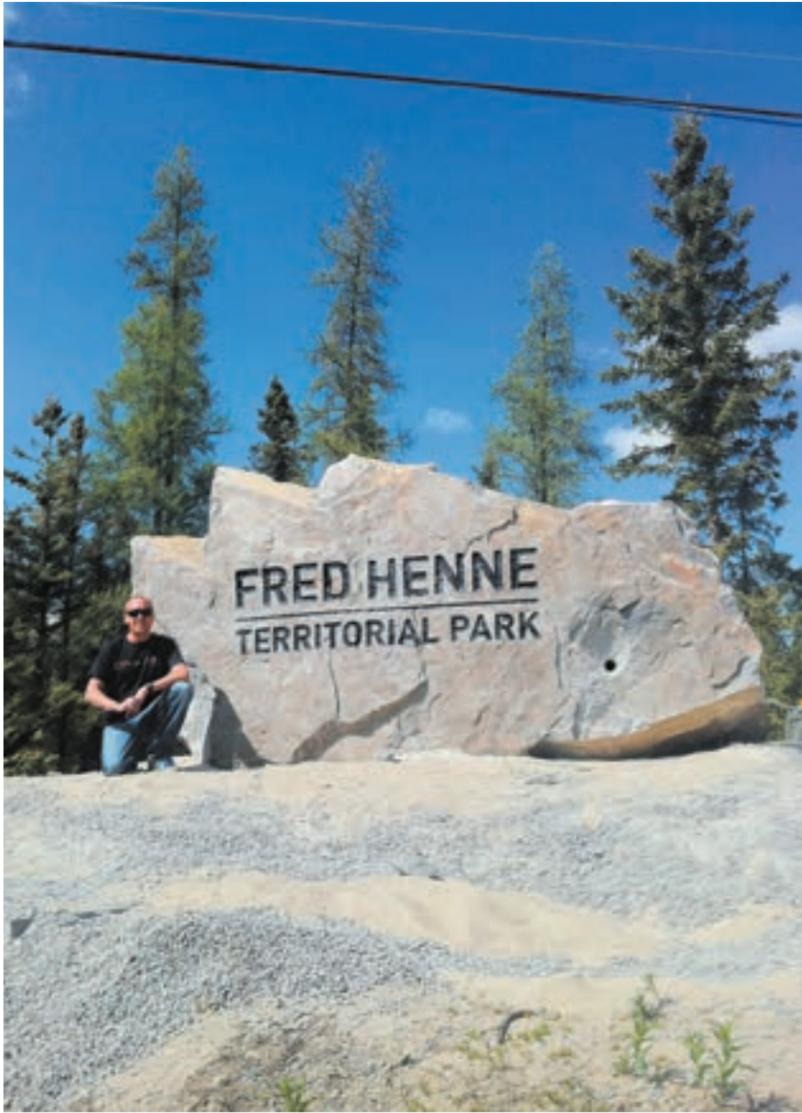
EMPLOYERS' KEY BENEFITS

- Help to ensure the health & safety of workers engaged in RCS dust producing processes.
- Assist in complying with the requirements of the OHS Regulation relating to assessing & controlling RCS dust exposures to below the allowable exposure limit.
- In some situations, eliminate the need for air monitoring tests for planned work processes, which is particularly helpful given that testing can often be challenging on construction sites because of short duration of work, and changing nature of activities.
- Preparation of specific process-based ECP templates that can be tailored for each jobsite.

The BCCSA Silica Control Tool can be a valuable aid to qualified persons in conducting RCS dust risk assessments, selecting and implementing controls and developing ECPs. However, the Tool is NOT a replacement for professional advice or jobsite air monitoring tests as may be needed. Jobsites and construction projects can be highly complex with unique variables and ever changing nature of work. The Tool does not purport to provide a conclusive output for every possible RCS dust producing process. Employers are ultimately responsible for taking whatever steps are needed to ensure that the requirements of the OHS Regulation are met.

...another tool developed by
BCCSA  **BC Construction Safety Alliance**

Forever monuments: Set in Stone creates projects for eternity



SET IN STONE

Kevin Elliott of Set in Stone says one his most challenging projects was engraving this rock entrance sign near Yellowknife in 2011.

PETER KENTER
CORRESPONDENT

The owner of Set in Stone would never have started a stone engraving business if it weren't for the ongoing softwood lumber dispute between Canada and the U.S.

"My family owned a logging business and the U.S. slapped a tariff on the lumber we produced," Kevin Elliott recalls.

"My family left Alberta and returned to B.C. to begin quarrying rock. I also got into rock, but I decided that if people were going to buy rocks they would be more likely to buy rocks with words engraved in them."

Elliott had an affinity for art and had worked at a sign shop during his high school years. Newly married with a one-year-old baby he went all-in on the business, which launched in Calgary in 1999.

"I had a \$500 credit card and bought a sand blaster," he says.

"My neighbour had an old air compressor powered by a Chrysler Slant 6 engine that you could tow behind a vehicle. I cleaned the points and changed the rotor and the thing fired up. I did my homework and after some trial and error I was ready to go."

Engraving rock with a sandblasting unit requires the use of rubber templates, which absorb some of the energy imparted by high-velocity sand. By moving the sandblaster nozzle back and

forth across the template, stone is removed while the template is spared. He highlights the engraved areas using weather-resistant paint.

"When I started in the business, I would print out the templates and hand cut each of them," says Elliott.

"More than a dozen years ago I was working on a project for a golf course and completed hand cut templates for all of the tee markers and yardage signs. I realized then that I didn't want to hand cut another template. Instead, I bought a plotter that converts computer designs into ready-cut templates after I push the 'send' button."

Elliott initially purchased stone hewn from his father's B.C. quarry. He prefers working with argillite, a fine-grained sedimentary rock. He used to hand-select rock from his current supplier, but the quarry now knows what to look for — flat-faced rocks with a mountain-like profile. A smooth, flat face allows the engraved letters to "read true and clean."

The business is seasonal. He works with an employee or apprentice during the summer, and largely alone during winters.

After almost 30 years in the business, he's worked on almost every sort of engraved rock project imaginable, from tiny pet memorials, to address engravings, entrance signs at housing developments and business signage. He'll

work remotely, or complete the work at his facility, delivering stone engravings weighing as much as 24 tonnes to client addresses, with the help of a crane truck.

One of his most challenging projects involved engraving the rock entrance sign at Fred Henne Territorial Park near Yellowknife in 2011. It wasn't so much the job itself, but the distance involved.

"I was flown up with my template and paint, but I had to rent unproven equipment that I'd never worked with," he says.

"I knew that if the template messed up, I wouldn't be able to produce another one. I bought every bag of sand available in Yellowknife that day, so I knew there would be no margin for error. I'm happy to say that the job was a success."

Elliott recently purchased a diamond-toothed dragsaw to shape and create engraved stones for clients, that will commemorate the properties on which they're found.

"A lot of stone memorials are currently imported," he says.

"That doesn't seem right to me when you could choose a rock from Canadian soil. When people select a rock to bring to me, it comes with a personal story. They remember the details of choosing the rock, who was with them, whether it was raining that day and all sorts of other details. Rocks have their own personality, but for these projects, the client's story becomes part of it."

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The Independent Contractors and Businesses Association is a strong supporter of the construction industry and responsible resource development. For more than 40 years, ICBA has been working hard for investment in infrastructure, for open tendering and for a common sense approach to regulation.

Training

Never stop learning – ICBA's training team runs 250+ professional development courses all over B.C. We offer everything from trade-specific skills to change management, and can even customize courses for your company.

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Sid Returns

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