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Hello,

Thank you for contacting me regarding your concerns over the proposed Kinder Morgan heavy oil tanker and pipeline expansion. This project is on the minds of many British Columbians, and I want you to know that New Democrat leader John Horgan, I and our caucus are absolutely against this project. It is too risky for B.C.'s environment and economy; it threatens thousands of good, family-supporting jobs that depend on our healthy coastal environment, and it does not have the social license it needs from communities and First Nations to go forward.

It's simply not in the best interest of British Columbia to allow a sevenfold increase in tanker traffic in the Salish Sea.

That was further confirmed for John Horgan when in October he witnessed the mess made by the Nathan E. Stewart sinking on the central coast near Bella Bella. Although local Heiltsuk responders were on the water immediately, it took almost a full day for the formal oil spill response to begin, and when it did, the response was inadequate. Booms were broken over and over again by rough waters. Debris littered the coast and oil fouled clam beds on which the Heiltsuk rely. This was a relatively small spill of a refined oil product whereas Kinder Morgan would have tankers carrying heavy bitumen, a mixture of unrefined tar along the coast. This puts the risk for B.C. even higher as heavy bitumen sinks and there's no known effective cleanup.

Unfortunately, fuel spills are not uncommon in British Columbia. In just the past two weeks B.C.'s coast and communities have experience two more diesel spills.

The Christy Clark government defends its decision to approve Kinder Morgan by stating that the spill response has improved. However there is no way for us to confirm this because the pipeline incident reporting webpage, which reports the location, frequency, causes and response to pipeline spills, has been offline for more than eight months.

This website is a fundamental part of the transparency that helps to keep government and resource companies accountable. Without this service, British Columbians are left without the resources to determine whether or not the government is doing enough to prevent and manage spills. This lack of transparency is a trend with this government, which continually skirts accountability.

It is the responsibility of the Premier and the Government of B.C. to stand firm to protect the interests of British Columbians. Instead of doing the right thing for our province, Christy Clark left B.C. on the sidelines during a secretive and inadequate environmental review of this project.

Time after time Christy Clark was given the chance to walk away from Stephen Harper's process and do a made in B.C. assessment that would protect our interests – but she refused and accepted the federal environmental assessment and the federal decision. British Columbians were left with a National Energy Board review that prioritized the economy over significant environmental concerns that were found throughout the process, including a considerable threat to the Southern resident killer whale, among other species.

John Horgan and the BC New Democrats know that the Kinder Morgan project is not in the best interest of British Columbians and that the risks are far too high. British Columbians deserve better and we will do everything in our power to stop it. By accepting the federal decision Christy Clark and her government have left us with fewer options to fight this project.

Christy Clark hasn't stepped up to defend our coast – but we have and we will.

We can defend our coast and build up B.C.'s economy – it doesn't have to be one or the other.

Thank you for standing up for British Columbia.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "George Heyman". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

George Heyman

MLA for Vancouver-Fairview

Official Opposition Spokesperson for Environment, Green Economy and Technology