

From: Duncan, Dave TRAN:EX
Sent: Wednesday, May 16, 2012 11:19 AM
To: s.22
Cc: Bhatti, Ashok TRAN:EX
Subject: 202628 - George Massey Tunnel

s.22

202628 - George Massey Tunnel

Dear s.22

Thank you for your email of March 15, 2012, inquiring about possible future replacement of the George Massey Tunnel, as well as media references to the Steer Davis Gleave report 'H99 concept.' I apologize for the delay in my response.

Efficient movement of both the travelling public and commercial transport is one of the ministry's highest priorities. Although the ministry is not currently considering options for replacement of the George Massey Tunnel, we do recognize congestion is an issue at this location, particularly during the peak periods of the day, and our staff are currently exploring all options to reduce congestion into the future.

As you may be aware, close to \$40 million has been invested in the Highway 99 bus network that carries passengers from the South Surrey Park and Ride at King George Blvd and Highway 99 to downtown Vancouver via a connection to the Canada Line at Bridgeport Station. These improvements have made the bus service faster and more reliable. The feedback we have received about these buses from our transit partners, TransLink and Coast Mountain Bus Company, has been very positive. Additional improvements at the approaches at either end of the tunnel have also given buses priority, helping to minimize transit delays through the tunnel.

We have also completed more than 50 percent of the new four-lane South Fraser Perimeter Road and Port Mann Highway 1 projects, which will improve highway connections south of the Fraser River. While these projects, which are part of the over \$5 billion invested in highway improvements across the Lower Mainland/South Coast since 2001, will make a big difference for travelers across the region, we recognize more can always be done. Once these projects are complete and in operation, ministry staff will be reviewing the performance of our south coast highway system and considering further priority projects as funding becomes available. Feedback and input from individuals like yourself is always appreciated as we move forward with this work.

Should you have any further questions or concerns about this matter, please do not hesitate to contact Ashok Bhatti, Operations Manager for the Lower Mainland District. He can be reached at 604 660-8309 or by e-mail at Ashok.Bhatti@gov.bc.ca and would be pleased to assist you.
Yours truly,

Dave Duncan

Assistant Deputy Minister, Highways Department
Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure

Copy: Ashok Bhatti, Acting District Operations Manager
Lower Mainland District Office

From: s.22
Sent: Thursday, March 15, 2012 11:50 AM
To: Duncan, Dave TRAN:EX
Subject: George Massey Tunnel

>> Mr. Duncan, ADM, Highways:
>>
>> I have a question of clarification about the George Massey Tunnel
and the potential option to construct its replacement at some
indeterminate time in the future.
>>
>> There have been references in the media to a Steer Davies Gleave
report that refers to a 'H99' concept, a new tunnel across the Fraser
River at Deas Island.
>>
>> The H99 concept raised by Steer Davis Gleave would likely help
alleviate traffic congestion between Delta and Richmond. Also, a new
deeper tunnel would likely provide an improved navigation channel for
deeper draft vessels on the Fraser River.
>>
>> My question is: Is there a current plan under review by BC MoT that
includes an option to replace the George Massey Tunnel?
>>
>> If not, do you expect that a review may occur in the future at some
time in the future? (i.e. 10, 20, or 30 years).
>>
>> Thank you for your time, and I hope that you will respond to my
inquiry.
>>
>> Regards,
>> s.22
>>
>> Email. s.22

>> Tel. s.22

**MINISTRY OF TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE
BRIEFING NOTE**

**Cliff #: 202313
March 19, 2012**

REGION: SOUTH COAST REGION

MoT DISTRICT: LOWER MAINLAND DISTRICT

ELECTORAL DISTRICT:

MUNICIPALITY / DELTA SOUTH / DELTA / METRO VANCOUVER

REGIONAL DISTRICT:

I. PREPARED FOR: Information

II. ISSUE:

Mayor Lois E. Jackson has requested a meeting with the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (MoTI) to discuss a number of transportation related issues, including congestion at the George Massey Tunnel.

III. BACKGROUND:

The George Massey Tunnel (GMT) is a four lane crossing of the Fraser River between the communities of Richmond and Delta and connects Highway 99 from the US/Canada border to Vancouver at the Oak Street Bridge (see attached map).

Richmond and Surrey are rapidly growing communities and development is creating congestion at the tunnel during peak hour travel times. To ease congestion, the tunnel operates a counter-flow system by changing the direction to three lanes in favour of the heaviest movements during the AM and PM peak hours. The locations of two key interchanges immediately on either end of the tunnel also contribute to congestion as they support access to the communities of Richmond and Delta.

IV. DISCUSSION:

The GMT was constructed in the 1950's and was recently structurally seismically upgraded. The Ministry has recently invested in upgrading the power distribution, lighting, fire detection/response, drainage pumps, earthquake monitoring and lane control systems to ensure the long term safety and reliability of the tunnel operations. There is no major rehabilitation work required to the tunnel for at least the next 10 to 15 years and the ministry has no current plans to expand or replace the tunnel in the immediate term.

To address the current congestion at the tunnel, the ministry is undertaking several major initiatives in the area:

The construction of the new 40km South Fraser Perimeter Road (SFPR) connecting Deltaport Way to Highway 15 will offer the largest impact to addressing congestion at

GMT. The SFPR is anticipated to reduce the amount of traffic (including truck traffic) that would normally travel through the GMT. The SFPR will divert some traffic originating from Deltaport and Tsawwassen area to alternative Fraser River crossings such as the Alex Fraser, Patullo or Port Mann Bridge depending on the final destination.

The Ministry is also continuing to invest in transit facilities such as the shoulder bus lane on Highway 99 from King George Boulevard in South Surrey to Bridgeport Road in Richmond, in order to move more commuters with transit. Our transit partners (TransLink, Coast Mountain Bus Company) have already indicated that transit travel times between Surrey and downtown Vancouver (via the Canada Line) is competitive if not faster than commuting by passenger vehicle over the same corridor.

The Ministry is also implementing an Advanced Traveler Information System for the GMT and Alex Fraser Bridges as part of the Border Thinning project. The system will provide travelers with real-time travel information for deciding on the most optimal route to travel between Vancouver and Surrey/Delta (GMT or Alex Fraser Bridge).

s.13

V. CONSULTATIONS:

- Corporation of Delta

VII. RECOMMENDATIONS/SUMMARY:

- The Ministry will continue to ensure that the George Massey Tunnel and the Highway 99 corridor remain safe and reliable for the travelling public.
- Recognizing that congestion on the corridor will grow as communities continue to develop, the Ministry is committed to: continuing to expanding the transit/HOV network on Highway 99; working to complete the new SFPR to redirect some truck traffic demand away from the tunnel; and providing drivers with alternative choices by completing the GMT/Alex Fraser Bridge Advanced Traveler information System.

s.13

Program Area Contact: Brian Atkins
Director Approval: Patrick Livolsi
ADM Approval: Shanna Mason

Phone: 604-660-8303

Date: March 12, 2012

Copyright

Haskett, Sara TRAN:EX

From: Transportation, Minister TRAN:EX
Sent: Wednesday, November 16, 2011 1:52 PM
To: s.22
Cc: Bhatti, Ashok TRAN:EX
Subject: 198718 – George Massey Tunnel and Steveston Interchange

Categories: TRIM/CLIFF

s.22

198718 – George Massey Tunnel and Steveston Interchange

Dear s.22

Thank you for your e-mail regarding traffic congestion at the George Massey Tunnel, also known as the Deas Island Tunnel, and at the Steveston Interchange.

I was glad to have the opportunity to review your concerns about the flow of traffic at these locations, and I understand you have written to my predecessor, the Honourable Shirley Bond, about this matter in the past. While I recognize you would like to see the tunnel's capacity increased, the ministry's strategic priorities for this corridor remain improving the efficiency of the highway by providing alternatives to single occupant vehicles, rather than through highway expansion. Also, as you may be aware, since you last wrote we have opened the recently extended bus lane network along Highway 99 and are working towards introducing rapid bus service in both directions along this corridor. This will provide an alternative to car travel and reduce traffic volumes through the George Massey Tunnel and across the Oak Street Bridge.

We have also examined potential improvements to the Steveston Interchange in the past, in partnership with the City of Richmond, and we continue to discuss improvement options for this location to accommodate the growing traffic demand in the southern part of Richmond, including the possibility of a roundabout, as you suggest. The new South Fraser Perimeter Road is also expected to divert significant traffic volumes, especially heavy truck traffic, from the existing Highway 17/River Road route and to improve commuting times for everyone travelling on these corridors.

The public's patience is appreciated as we work to construct this new infrastructure. Once complete, we will re-assess the new traffic patterns on many of our corridors to determine where additional improvements are needed. In the meantime, should you have further questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to contact the ministry's Operations Manager for the Lower Mainland District, Ashok Bhatti. He can be reached in New Westminster at 604 660-8309 or by e-mail at Ashok.Bhatti@gov.bc.ca and would be pleased to assist you.

Thank you again for taking the time to write.

Sincerely,

Blair Lekstrom
Minister

Copy to: Ashok Bhatti, Operations Manager

January 10, 2012

Vicki Huntington
MLA, Delta-South
4805 Delta Street
Delta BC V4K 2T7

Reference: 199540

Dear MLA Huntington:

Re: George Massey Tunnel

Thank you for your letter sharing your constituents' concerns about congestion at the George Massey Tunnel, particularly with respect to container truck traffic. Please accept my apologies for the lateness of this reply.

Ensuring the safest and most efficient movement of traffic is one of the ministry's highest priorities. We have been working to address the issue of traffic congestion approaching the George Massey Tunnel, and expect that the South Fraser Perimeter Road should alleviate some congestion as drivers realize the significant travel savings of the new road. As you noted, building a new tunnel or bridge would be a major undertaking, and based on government priorities we do not anticipate making any changes to the capacity of the tunnel in the short to medium term. However, we recognize more can always be done, and the ministry is certainly interested in looking at cost-effective safety and reliability improvement opportunities for the tunnel approaches.

I understand the ministry's District Manager Brian Atkins met with you on December 13 to initiate discussions about congestion around the tunnel, including the northbound exit. Mr. Atkins will be leading further discussions with you and the community in order to identify potential improvements, and I am pleased to know he will be organizing a follow-up meeting early in the new year. Ministry staff will keep me apprised of your discussions.

Should you have any questions about this matter in the meantime, please don't hesitate to contact the South Coast Regional Director, Patrick Livolsi, directly. He can be reached by telephone at 604 660-8205 or by e-mail at Patrick.Livolsi@gov.bc.ca and would be pleased to assist you.

.../2

- 2 -

Thank you again for contacting us to express your constituents' concerns and we look forward to working with you and the community on developing practical solutions.

Sincerely,

Original Signed By:

Blair Lekstrom
Minister

Copy to: Patrick Livolsi, Regional Director



Legislative Office:
Room 145, Parliament Buildings
Victoria, B.C. V8V 1X4
Phone: 250 952-7594
Fax: 250 952-7598
e-mail: vicki.huntington.mla@leg.bc.ca

Legislative Assembly
Province of British Columbia
Victoria J. Huntington, M.L.A.
(Delta South)

Constituency Office:
4805 Delta Street
Delta, B.C. V4K 2T7
Phone: 604 940-7284
Fax: 604 940-7927
www.vickihuntington.ca

October 19, 2011

Hon. Blair Lekstrom
Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure
Room 342, Parliament Buildings
Victoria, BC V8V 1X4

Dear Minister Lekstrom,

I am writing to relay the concerns I have heard from many of my constituents about the George Massey Tunnel, an aging structure which does noble duty connecting communities on both sides of the Fraser River.

The primary issue is congestion at the tunnel. It is already a major choke point and the situation will only grow worse with population growth and planned port expansion.

The volume of container truck traffic using the tunnel is a particular concern. I recognize the South Fraser Perimeter Road will assist in alleviating truck congestion in Delta. However, it will do nothing for the substantial north-south container traffic that presently uses the tunnel.

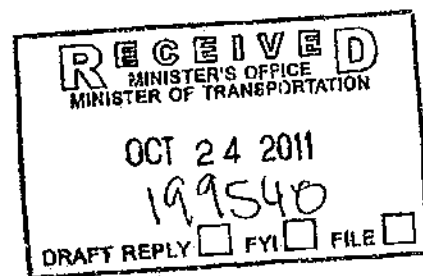
The Corporation of Delta, our Member of Parliament, Ms. Kerry-Lynne D. Findlay, and I are interested in working with you and your federal counterpart to address this increasingly dangerous issue. Short of a new bridge across the Fraser River, it is imperative that a solution to the growing north-south movement of container traffic be found: the George Massey Tunnel cannot safely sustain an increase in this type of heavy commercial vehicle.

Thank you for your time and attention to this increasingly grave matter.

Yours truly,

Vicki Huntington, MLA
Delta South

Cc Corporation of Delta
Ms. Kerry-Lynne Findlay, Q.C., M.P.





THE CORPORATION OF DELTA

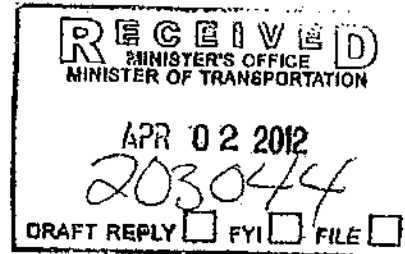
From the office of:

The Mayor,
Lois E. Jackson

COPY

March 28, 2012

The Honourable Kevin Falcon
Minister of Finance and Deputy Premier
PO Box 9048, Stn Prov Govt
Victoria, BC V8W 9E2



Dear Minister, *Kevin*

Re: Delta Transportation Issues

It was a pleasure to meet with you at yesterday's South Asian Business Community luncheon. As we discussed, I am enclosing the information that was presented to Minister Lekstrom during our March 22, 2012 meeting – specifically, Highway 99 right-in/out at 80th Street, dredging local navigation channels and South Delta transportation issues related to the George Massey Tunnel.

I appreciate your interest and consideration of these important issues.

If you have any questions or comments, please do not hesitate to contact my office directly at (604) 946-3210.

Yours truly,

Lois E. Jackson
Lois E. Jackson
Mayor

Enclosure

cc: The Honourable Blair Lekstrom, Minister of Transportation & Infrastructure
Dave Hayer, MLA, Surrey-Tynehead



There is an urgent need to undertake dredging of the secondary navigation channels around Ladner Harbour. Sediment has been accumulating in these channels during the last twenty years since the cessation of regular maintenance dredging by Public Works Canada.

Since 2009, the Corporation of Delta has been working with Port Metro Vancouver and other stakeholders to develop a dredging strategy and identify funding sources in order to **promote economic and environmental revitalization of the harbour and waterfront for the benefit of businesses, local residents and the community as a whole**. The objectives are:

1. Provide clear, safe navigation channels for fishing vessels, commercial boats and recreational craft and restore unimpeded access to waterfront businesses and residences.
2. Protect existing business activity and stimulate new economic investment in the Ladner waterfront commercial and residential areas.
3. Maintain the heritage character of Ladner village and promote tourism related to activities in the commercial/waterfront core, and eco-tourism related to river-based and wildlife-viewing activities.
4. Protect inter-tidal habitat for the benefit of fish and wildlife.
5. Reduce vulnerability to extreme weather and tidal events that may cause flooding.

Several steps have been made towards achieving these goals:

1. A **technical study**, which accurately maps and describes the sediment dynamics within the local channels, is complete. This study, which was funded by Port Metro Vancouver, forms the basis of the dredging plan.
2. An **economic impact assessment**, which will identify the economic impacts associated with continued non-dredging, is being prepared by InterVistas and is expected to be complete by April 2012. This will form the basis of a business case for dredging.
3. A **dredging plan**, which identifies priority channels for dredging and sediment disposal options, is being prepared by Delta in conjunction with Port Metro Vancouver, Fraser River Pile & Dredge and the Ladner Sediment Group.



4. A **funding proposal** has been prepared. The cost to dredge the channels back to 1990s conditions is in the order of \$8 million:

- Port Metro Vancouver has committed \$2.3 million
- The Corporation of Delta has committed \$2 million

These funding commitments are a reflection of the level of concern there is regarding this issue and of the desire to see the situation resolved.

The Corporation of Delta is seeking commitments from the provincial and federal governments to provide financial assistance to undertake critical channel dredging in the secondary navigation channels and to develop a program of annual funding for maintenance dredging of the local channels.

Attachment:

Mayor Lois E. Jackson's presentation to the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services (September 2010)



The Corporation of Delta
4500 Clarence Taylor Crescent
Delta, BC V4K 3E2
604.946.4141
www.corp.delta.bc.ca

September 16, 2010

**Presentation to the Legislative Assembly of British Columbia
SELECT STANDING COMMITTEE ON FINANCE AND GOVERNMENT SERVICES**

Funding for Local Channel Dredging in the Lower Fraser River

The Fraser River is British Columbia's largest river, flowing 1,400 km and draining one quarter of the landscape. It also carries 20 million tonnes of sediment annually into the Fraser delta, most of it during the spring freshet.

Historically, dredging of the Fraser River was the responsibility of the Canadian Coast Guard and funded by the Federal Government. In late 1998, federal funding ceased, and responsibility for dredging the deep-sea shipping channels was passed onto what is now Port Metro Vancouver.

Also at that time, Transport Canada placed engineered structures at key locations in the lower Fraser River to divert most of the flow into the main channel. While this was successful in reducing the need for dredging the main channel, it was to the detriment of the local navigation channels where flow was reduced by as much as 70%, thereby accelerating the deposition of sediment.

Since the cessation of the federal dredging program, there has been over 10 years of sediment accumulation in the lower Fraser's local navigation channels. Recent bathymetric analyses have determined that 1.2 million cubic meters of sediment needs to be removed to return the channels to pre-1990 conditions. Sediment loads are expected to increase as a result of the massive deforestation and soil erosion caused by the mountain pine beetle.

The potential impacts of continued non-dredging of the local channels in the Lower Fraser include:

Increased flood risk – failure to adequately dredge local channels contributes to rising river bottom levels and a greater likelihood of high spring freshet river flows overtopping the dyke system, particularly when coupled with winter storm conditions.

Vulnerability to climate change – a recent research project undertaken by Natural Resources Canada identified the Fraser Delta as being highly vulnerable to the effects of climate change, increasing storm severity and sea-level rise. Dyke reinforcement and river dredging are key components in the mitigation strategy.

Impacts on the provincial and local economy – in 2008, the Fraser River carried over 33 million tonnes of cargo, generating \$4.6 billion in GDP and \$9.6 million in economic output. Dredging costs are decreasing the economic viability of the port. On a local scale, numerous communities along the lower Fraser River from Delta and Richmond up to Mission are being negatively impacted by the lack of dredging. Economic losses totalling millions of dollars include property devaluation, relocation of industries, loss of property taxes, impacts on local marinas, local fisheries and float home communities.

In Delta, the impacts of sedimentation are most apparent in the channels around Ladner Harbour. A local community group, the Ladner Sediment Group, has recently received funding from Port Metro Vancouver to undertake a study of the sedimentation and river flow processes in the Ladner area. The goal is to develop a long-term sustainable sediment management plan for the area – a plan that does not necessarily rely on annual dredging to solve the problem. Computer modelling of various flow diversion scenarios is underway and the results are expected by the end of 2010.

The Corporation of Delta is also preparing a grant application to the Provincial Flood Protection Program of Emergency Management BC for funding to assist in implementing the Ladner Harbour sediment management program once it has been developed.

This issue of local channel dredging has been raised at numerous times with the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, the Union of British Columbia Municipalities, and presentations have been made to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance, to Federal and Provincial Ministers, and to the BC Federal Conservative Caucus. So far, no government agency has been willing to commit to funding this essential service.

In summary, there is an immediate and urgent need to establish a long-term, sustainable dredging program for the secondary navigation channels of the lower Fraser River. Delta is therefore requesting that the Provincial Government, with or without federal support, contribute annual funding for local navigation channel dredging in the lower Fraser River.

Thank you.

Lois E. Jackson
Mayor
The Corporation of Delta

September 16, 2010

SELECT STANDING COMMITTEE ON FINANCE AND GOVERNMENT SERVICES

Funding for Local Channel Dredging in the Lower Fraser River

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The Fraser River is British Columbia's largest river, flowing 1,400 km and draining one quarter of the landscape. It also carries 20 million tonnes of sediment annually into the Fraser delta, most of it during the spring freshet.

Historically, dredging of the Fraser River was the responsibility of the Canadian Coast Guard and funded by the Federal Government. In late 1998, federal funding ceased, and responsibility for dredging the deep-sea shipping channels was passed onto what is now Port Metro Vancouver.

Also at that time, Transport Canada placed engineered structures at key locations in the lower Fraser River to divert most of the flow into the main channel. While this was successful in reducing the need for dredging the main channel, it was to the detriment of the local navigation channels where flow was reduced by as much as 70%, thereby accelerating the deposition of sediment.

Since the cessation of the federal dredging program, there has been over 10 years of sediment accumulation in the lower Fraser's local navigation channels. Recent bathymetric analyses have determined that 1.2 million cubic meters of sediment needs to be removed to return the channels to pre-1990 conditions. Sediment loads are expected to increase as a result of the massive deforestation and soil erosion caused by the mountain pine beetle.

The potential impacts of continued non-dredging of the local channels in the Lower Fraser include:

- **Increased flood risk** – failure to adequately dredge local channels contributes to rising river bottom levels and a greater likelihood of high spring freshet river flows overtopping the dyke system, particularly when coupled with winter storm conditions.
- **Vulnerability to climate change** – a recent research project undertaken by Natural Resources Canada identified the Fraser Delta as being highly vulnerable to the effects of climate change, increasing storm severity and sea-level rise. Dyke reinforcement and river dredging are key components in the mitigation strategy.
- **Impacts on the provincial and local economy** – in 2008, the Fraser River carried over 33 million tonnes of cargo, generating \$4.6 billion in GDP and \$9.6 million in economic output. Dredging costs are decreasing the economic viability of the port. On a local scale, numerous communities along the lower Fraser River from Delta and Richmond up to Mission are being negatively impacted by the lack of dredging. Economic losses totalling millions of dollars include property devaluation, relocation of industries, loss of property taxes, impacts on local marinas, local fisheries and float home communities.

In Delta, the impacts of sedimentation are most apparent in the channels around Ladner Harbour. A local community group, the Ladner Sediment Group, has recently received funding from Port Metro Vancouver to undertake a study of the sedimentation and river flow processes in the Ladner area. The goal is to develop a long-term sustainable sediment management plan for the area – a plan that does not necessarily rely on annual dredging to solve the problem. Computer modelling of various flow diversion scenarios is underway and the results are expected by the end of 2010.

The Corporation of Delta is also preparing a grant application to the Provincial Flood Protection Program of Emergency Management BC for funding to assist in implementing the Ladner Harbour sediment management program once it has been developed.

This issue of local channel dredging has been raised at numerous times with the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, the Union of British Columbia Municipalities, and presentations have been made to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance, to Federal and Provincial Ministers, and to the BC Federal Conservative Caucus. So far, no government agency has been willing to commit to funding this essential service.

In summation, there is an immediate and urgent need to establish a long-term, sustainable dredging program for the secondary navigation channels of the lower Fraser River. Delta is therefore requesting that the Provincial Government, with or without federal support, contribute annual funding for local navigation channel dredging in the lower Fraser River.

BACKGROUND:

The Fraser River, flowing more than 1,400 km and draining an area one-quarter of the area of the province, is the largest river in British Columbia. Annually, more than 20 million tonnes of sediment is carried from the upper Fraser River in the interior and deposited in the lower Fraser River delta. The mass tree loss caused by the mountain pine beetle is contributing to soil runoff and increased sediment loads in the river. In order to keep shipping channels open, maintenance dredging must be undertaken. Without dredging, key deep sea shipping and domestic navigational channels on the lower Fraser would become too shallow for commercial and domestic vessels to safely access port facilities.

For nearly 100 years, dredging of the Fraser River was the responsibility of the Canadian Coast Guard (CCG) and funded by the Federal Government. In the early 1990's, Transport Canada placed diversions at critical locations along the river to divert more water into the deep-sea shipping and the domestic navigational channels. The intention of this diversion was to increase flow into these channels, and reduce the reliance on dredging. This project was successful in that it saved millions of dollars in dredging expenditures; however, it came at the expense of the local channels which were inundated with additional silt that has dramatically reduced water depths.

In late 1998, federal funding stopped, CCG ceased dredging and since then the local port authority, Port Metro Vancouver (PMV), has undertaken regular maintenance dredging of primarily the main channel of the lower Fraser. Funding to conduct their dredging activities came from a \$15 million settlement from the CCG for early termination of their dredging agreement. Between 1999 and 2002 the port authority dredged some local navigation channels; but the settlement funding has since been depleted and scheduled maintenance dredging of local navigation channels had to stop. Since the cessation of the dredging program, there has been approximately 10 years of sediment

accumulation in the lower Fraser's local navigation channels. Recent bathymetric analyses have determined that 1.2 million cubic meters of sediment needs to be removed.

PORT METRO VANCOUVER:

Port Metro Vancouver currently dredges the lower Fraser River for navigation purposes where commercially viable. Since undertaking this task in 1999, they have focused the majority of their efforts on maintaining and improving the main channels only. However, Port Metro Vancouver recognizes the significant economic and local community and industry benefit from ensuring that smaller users can still safely access the local navigation channels. In an effort to create sustainable long-term certainty around access to these sites, the Port is assisting users with the development of user-based, long-term maintenance plans. Port Metro Vancouver has already conducted some preliminary studies to determine the costs to undertake local navigation channel dredging. The results of the study indicate that restoring the channels to pre-1998 conditions will cost an estimated \$5 million as a onetime expenditure and \$500,000 annually as an on-going maintenance dredging expenditure.

To assist with these costs, PMV has developed a 10-year *Local Channel Dredging Contribution Program* that will provide financial support for riverfront communities to undertake their own dredging activities beyond deep sea and domestic shipping channels. The contribution program will support long-term community-based plans and has been budgeted at up to \$7 million over 10 years but shall not exceed \$500,000 per local channel over a 10-year period. Port Metro Vancouver is providing \$125,000 for Ladner Sediment Group (user group in Delta) to retain a consultant to undertake a Ladner Harbour Sedimentation Study to assess how the group can use other tools, not just dredging, to reduce the amount of sediment build-up in the local navigation channels.

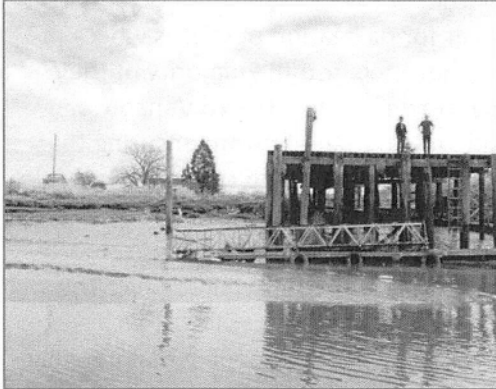
While a benefit to long-term sustainable planning initiatives the Port contributions are completely inadequate to maintain local channels at a safe and acceptable depth. Therefore, Delta is requesting that the Provincial Government provide adequate long term funding to implement a local navigation channel dredging program on the Fraser River.

IMPACTS OF LOCAL NAVIGATION CHANNEL INFILLING:

LADNER SEDIMENT GROUP

There are many and varied local navigation channel users groups in Delta. Many are represented by the Ladner Sediment Group. The Ladner Sediment Group consists of water lot owners, local business owners and local channel users. This group is serving as a catalyst to deliver the message of the impacts of the neglect of the local channels. They understand their responsibility to keep water lots clean and free of silt. But it is currently an effort in futility when the channel is silted in. When water lots are dredged at significant costs to individuals they become lower than the river's local navigation channels. This causes silt from the local channel to slough back into the hole. In the past, water lot dredging typically lasted 4 to 5 years. Today, it is fortunate to keep an adequate draft for 4 to 6 months. Float homes, docks, boats and other structures are now regularly and dangerously being lifted out of the water by local channel river sediment. Figures 1 and 2 provide good examples of this regular occurrence.

Figure 1



This dock used to receive large vessels but has been inaccessible for 5 years.

Figure 2



A tug and barge stuck in the middle of a local channel.

The local navigation channels are silting in at an alarming rate. Where there was 20 ft of water at low tides there are now many areas that are only 2 to 3 feet deep. This has resulted in the channels becoming a hazard to navigate, water lease lot owners experiencing their floating homes and vessels tied to docks going aground at low tide, at times causing damage to the structure, commercial and residential boat owners can no longer safely access areas when there is insufficient water to navigate, and substantial private expenditures are being incurred to keep floating structures out of the mud.

FISHERIES AND OCEANS CANADA'S SMALL CRAFT HARBOURS:

Fisheries and Oceans Canada's Small Craft Harbours (SCH) program is responsible for ensuring core fishing harbours are kept open and in good repair. Of the 1170 small craft harbours owned by DFO, approximately 750 are considered to be core harbours – those which are considered critical to the fishing and aquaculture industries are managed by Harbour Authorities. Ladner Small Craft Harbour, managed by the Ladner Harbour Authority is one of these core harbours. The Ladner Small Craft Harbour is accessible via a local navigation channel of the Fraser River and is located in the municipality of Delta. This vital economic, cultural and community harbour is often only accessible at high tides. It is not uncommon to see vessels stranded and run aground in the centre of the local channel trying to navigate to the larger channels. Boats, docks and other structures in this harbour are regularly seen sitting askew as the tide drains to leave them sitting on the river bed. It is essential that this important channel remain open and accessible.

ECONOMIC IMPORTANCE OF LOCAL NAVIGATION CHANNELS:

Industries and urban areas along the Fraser River account for 80% of the provincial and 10% of the national gross domestic product. In 2003, DFO commissioned a study to assess the economic impacts of the SCH network of fishing harbours in British Columbia. According to this study, in 2001-2002, the province's 101 fishing harbours generated upwards of \$800 million in economic activity (including commercial fishing, marine recreation, and other activities such as aquaculture). This was directly translated into an estimated \$485 million in annual gross domestic product, \$245 million in annual labour income (wages plus benefits), and 6,135 person-years of annual employment. In addition to fishing harbours, in 2003, the Fraser River Port – one of three ports amalgamated to

create Port Metro Vancouver directly generated 16,100 jobs, and \$3.7 billion in local economic output.

A CASE FOR FUNDING – ST. LAWRENCE RIVER ICE-BREAKING:

The local navigation channels of the St. Lawrence River require ice-breaking to maintain open and safe navigation channels in this important sea way. While dredging is not as major an issue as for the Fraser River, cold winter temperatures create a different kind of obstacle for those using the river and its channels. Unlike the Fraser River's, these local navigation channels continue to receive funding for ice-breaking services in order to keep those channels open and safe for navigation. In fact out of a national annual budget of \$6.9million, 80% or \$5.5million are designated for the St Lawrence. It is important that the significant economic, social and cultural benefit of the lower Fraser River is recognized similarly to that of the St. Lawrence and that it receives the same level of federal commitment , to ensure all reaches of the river are accessible throughout the year.

CONCLUSION:

The almost complete cessation of the local navigation channel dredging program in the lower Fraser River has implications for the safety and accessibility of marine traffic, fish boats and float homes. This impacts the economic, social and cultural viability of the Fraser River delta water corridor. It is important that long term funding be provided to Port Metro Vancouver to ensure that local navigation channels along the Fraser River are deep enough for navigation purposes, and for ongoing commercial operation of the river port. We are asking the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services to allocate funding for local navigation channel dredging in the lower Fraser River. This program would involve a onetime expenditure of \$5 million dollars to bring the channels back to a similar condition of 15 years ago and an ongoing annual maintenance dredging allotment of \$500,000.

Attachment:

Map of Lower Fraser River

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