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## Oil Dispersant May Damage Lung Cells

Researchers at the University of Alabama at Birmingham think that Corexit EC9500A, an oil dispersant widely used in the Gulf of Mexico following the *Deepwater Horizon* oil spill, can damage epithelium cells in the lungs of humans and the gills of marine creatures. Exposure to the dispersant can lead to swelling of the airway, and an inflammatory response in the epithelium, exacerbating pre-existing respiratory diseases such as asthma.

The researchers also identified an enzyme that has protective properties against Corexit-induced damage. They say that if a way could be found to boost production of the enzyme, heme oxygenase-1 (HO-1), it might prevent lung damage in future cases of exposure to oil dispersal agents.

The *Deepwater Horizon* spill (which began on April 20, 2010) spewed 205.8 million gallons of crude oil in three months from a wellhead blowout. To 'degrade and break down' the oil, it took 1.84 million gallons of Corexit EC9500A.

## Think Tank Proposes Carbon Pricing

A new organization—Canada's Ecofiscal Commission—has published its first report, and it's a kick in the pants for both federal and provincial governments. The commission, which consists of twelve economists backed up by an advisory board representing all sides of the political spectrum, says that each of the provinces should initiate carbon pricing as the core of its climate change strategy.

The commission suggests that the provinces need not all use the same tax rate. Commission Chair Chris Ragan has headlined his blog 'Economic and Environmental Prosperity? Yes. We Can Have Both.'

Carbon pricing has been proposed by the NDP; but it has been attacked by Prime Minister Harper as 'job-killing'. The commission says no, it isn't. Each of the provinces has a different mix of industries which would be affected by a carbon tax, and 'provinces should customize details of policy design based on their unique economic context and priorities.' The commission

also recommends gradual increases in carbon taxes to create stronger incentives over time for emission cuts, and move towards national co-ordination.

The fourteen member advisory board includes Jean Charest, Mike Harcourt, Preston Manning, Paul Martin, Jack Mintz, and Bob Rae.

The *National Post's* Terence Corcoran described the proposal as a 'Green Taxapalooza'. He comments: 'While the commission has no authority, it comes with lots of green ideological baggage and an economic heritage that eschews markets and property rights in favour of government-manipulated prices to achieve certain central objectives.'

## CBC Cuts 244 Jobs, Adds 80

The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation appears to be taking advantage of government-mandated job cuts to restructure much of its local TV and radio programming. English-language services would lose 25 positions in BC, 37 in Alberta, and 30 in Ontario; French-language operations would lose about 100 positions. But 80 positions would be added in 'digital news'.

As previously announced, many of CBC's supper-hour local newscasts will be cut to 30 minutes. However, Jennifer McGuire, general manager and editor-in-chief of CBC News and Centres, anticipates shifting resources to quicker-reacting mobile news sources. She described a 'mobile service' that is 'active and hot 18 hours a day, 7 days a week'. The CBC, she said, would be 'touching base' with viewers and listeners 'less long, but more frequently'.

Marc-Philippe Laurin, president of the Canadian Media Guild, representing CBC's English-language employees, said, 'Canadians have been clear that local news is very important to them, and CBC plays a huge role in that. These cuts are a major blow to Canada's biggest, independent news organization.'

## New Ridings, New Candidates and Offices

The federal election is coming to life early this time. If the election is in October, not a snap election in June, this gives people enough time to get to know their candidates and be

excited enough to go to the polls. The Green Party of Canada has been hot off the mark and in the news in BC with Electoral District Associations electing candidates and opening campaign offices and launching campaigns since the end of last year.

On March 28, Green candidate Fran Hunt-Jinnouchi's campaign launch took place at the Quw'utsun' Cultural and Conference Centre in Duncan. Hunt-Jinnouchi will be seeking election in the Cowichan-Malahat-Langford Electoral District. Known as a fighter for social justice, she is the federal Green Party's Status of Women critic.

Today, Elizabeth May MP for Saanich-Gulf Islands and Frances Litman candidate for the new district of Esquimalt-Saanich-Sooke opened a joint office at 3550 Saanich Road on the Saanich border of the two redrawn districts. Part of Esquimalt-Saanich-Sooke used to be in Saanich-Gulf Islands. The event features 'meet the campaign teams' and a sign-up to volunteer.

Last week, Claire Martin, former weather forecaster for CBC, announced her Green Party candidacy in Vancouver North.

Please send us news of candidates from any party who is running in your electoral district (see map page 9) and also drop election2015@islandtides.com an email telling us what are key issues for you in the upcoming election to help us as we create our election news coverage.

## Alberta Oil Magazine National Survey

Alberta Oil Magazine recently published its National Survey on Energy Literacy. The survey is the collection of data from 1,396 online interviews conducted with a representative sample of Canadians.

The survey found that opposition to the proposed Kinder Morgan Trans Mountain pipeline is just as serious, if not more so, than opposition to Enbridge's proposed Northern Gateway pipeline. Furthermore, the survey found that the more educated citizens are, the less likely they are to support pipelines.

Fewer than one-in-ten post-graduates find the oil and gas industry associations credible and trustworthy when it comes to carbon emissions, and only 9.3% of people aged 18-34

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## LETTERS from page 5

providing more services, and re-election can often swing on whether or not they bend.

The problem here is in defining the general benefit to people. Citizens understandably want to maintain local control, but we live in an environment in which whole national economies rise or fall depending on what's happening elsewhere in the world. The general benefit of people now extends past borders just as money does.

Consequently, the court case is attacking the wrong end of the problem with the wrong tool. The problem lies in the system itself and how it is developed and managed. If the stated problem (as expressed in the article) is that control is handed over to non-democratic institutions, then we need to fundamentally rethink how nations work together and consider how to ensure that these institutions are accountable to the people of the world, regardless of borders.

Roy Smith, Galiano Island

## Shawnigan Contaminated Soil Dump

Dear Editor:

Shawnigan Lake residents and CVRD taxpayers have thus far spent \$1 million in the fight to have the Ministry of Environment revoke a CHH/SIA quarry permit to allow 5 million tonnes of contaminated soil to be dumped in our watershed.

It is unheard of to dump contaminated soil on a site in a community watershed where no contamination exists and there is an active quarry with on-going blasting. And yet, apparently, this BC government's Ministry of Environment, Ministry of

Health, and the Environmental Review Board believe this to be just fine.

South Island Aggregates Ltd opened their main 50-acre quarry on Stebbings Road (south of Shawnigan Lake) in 2006, in response to a dwindling local aggregate market. Now suddenly, there is a push for a commercial opportunity for SIA, based on the favourable economics of reclaiming an existing quarry with contaminated material. The CHH/SIA quarry proposes to take contaminated soil material at the third level of risk—industrial grade but with more noxious levels of contaminants and a hazardous waste level at the top of the pyramid. These materials would command much richer hauling charges than the innocuous domestic grade soil that was specified in their existing mining permit. Not only would this site fail in the case of contaminated soils, it would not even pass as a suitable location for the first level risk of a municipal waste landfill. The consequence of a system failure is a serious risk to public health.

Both before and during the EAB hearings, concluded on July 25, 2014, SIA's model of the quarry bedrock geology was repeatedly called into question by qualified hydrogeologists. It has been concluded that the bedrock is actually fractured and that water moves easily within the fissures. That should have been the end of it. And yet, with the collapse of the SIA's engineer's site model, SIA and the Ministry fell back on the idea that a fully engineered facility would be an acceptable substitute for the absent naturally suitable conditions originally used to justify the project. Thus the third level risk was transferred conveniently from a naturally suitable condition of impervious bedrock that would persist in perpetuity to a man-made system with a finite lifespan, dependent on continuous monitoring and maintenance only during the life of the project and a few years beyond. Then what?

I do not believe that the Ministry of Environment was elected to protect the financial interests of SIA over the protection of

thousands of current and future BC residents, who are being told to accept the obvious risks.

Nor should they ignore their mandate to protect the environment. Zoning Bylaw restrictions of the area in question have been disregarded, and the Ministry of Environment has ignored the CVRD's offer to work together to find a suitable site in the region and the Tervita site has been proposed as an example of an existing alternative dumpsite within the CRD.

Everything about this issue is completely incongruent with our provincial government's professed principles that 'BC is proud to be a leader in sustainable environmental management—with air and water quality that ranks among the highest in the world. Effective waste management procedures and solutions contribute a great deal to preserving our environment.'—Government of British Columbia (Spring edition of 'Stream Talk' newsletter' (2015).

The 'RBC Blue Water Project' concurs that 'Canada possesses nearly 6.5% of the world's supply of fresh water, making it one of the nation's most valued treasures. Canada has the second-best water-quality ranking among selected industrialized countries.'

Why would our BC Ministry of Environment deliberately jeopardize the protection of this valued resource? Most importantly, my family is now faced with risks to our drinking water, our environment, and especially, our health. The loss of confidence in both our future freshwater supply and in our elected provincial government officials to protect us is a reality I never would have believed possible in Canada.

Please continue to ensure that the BC electorate is kept informed of this serious situation. Victoria and Vancouver drinking watersheds are protected, as all drinking watersheds in BC should be. If this is allowed to happen in our watershed, then obviously no watershed in BC is guaranteed secure and protected.

Sylvia Gray, Shawnigan Lake

## ROUND THE ISLANDS from page 2

passengers themselves make it through security and onto the plane, luggage must be screened and loaded onto the plane, which can cause further delay. Waiting for even one passenger can sometimes mean the loss of a landing slot at the destination airport.

Check-in times for YQQ's airlines are: Central Mountain Air: recommended 60 minutes before scheduled departure, deadline 45 minutes before; Pacific Coastal Airlines: recommended 45 minutes before scheduled departure, deadline 20 minutes before; WestJet: recommended 60-90 minutes before scheduled departure, deadline 45 minutes before.

Allow time for parking or taxis in your check-in schedule. 'The last thing we want is for passengers to be turned away from their flights because they haven't given themselves enough time,' said Bigelow.

## YQQ New Service

And there will be more flights for which to be on time. On April 1st Comox Valley Airport Commission announced a twice weekly non-stop service from Comox to Honolulu beginning next winter onboard Fly YQQ, the nation's first ultra low cost carrier (ULCC).

The Fly YQQ is a wholly owned subsidiary of the Comox Valley Airport Commission and the airline has been successful in a race to raise sufficient capital to commence a ULCC service in Canada.

'The Comox Valley Airport Commission has raised \$20 million to fund the operation of Fly YQQ, including the purchase of one Boeing 737-700 series jet,' confirmed Frank van Gisbergen, Chair of the Comox Valley Airport Commission. 'With a focus on low-price air fares and a genuinely innovative operating model, we are confident we can make this airline work and change the way airports approach air service development in the future.'