



John Horgan MLA Juan de Fuca

Community Report MAY 2010

pg 1 of 2

Protecting our Precious Coast

No doubt, many of you have been following the news lately, watching in shock as thousands of litres of oil spill into the Gulf of Mexico. Many are predicting that this could be the United States' worst oil spill in history. The images are sickening and our thoughts go to both families who have lost loved ones and to those who depend on this eco-system for their economic security.

Could this sort of tragedy happen in our province? Along our west coast? Unfortunately, the answer is yes if the BC Liberal government continues aggressively lobbying the federal government to lift the moratorium banning offshore oil and gas development and drilling.

Their plan of action is clear. In 2003, Gordon Campbell said he wanted to have an offshore oil and gas industry that is up and running by 2010. In 2006, he told the Canadian Chamber of Commerce in Hong Kong that "in two or three years... you will see that opportunities expand." Last November, Energy Minister Blair Lekstrom

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stated that he was continuing to press the federal government to lift the ban, saying "there's a federal moratorium on this issue, but we do try and move that file forward as we can," and earlier this month he confirmed that the BC Liberals are still lobbying the federal government to allow for offshore drilling.

Based on the comments of the Premier and the Energy Minister, if they had their way, exploration and drilling will be happening sooner rather than later. And what if we had an accident similar to the Exxon Valdez or the current spill? It

would be devastating to marine wildlife and habitat up and down our sensitive coastline.

The Deepwater Horizon, the rig that went down in the Gulf of Mexico, was a state-of-the-art oil rig. Yet, for all its technological advances, it still caught fire. Technology is not foolproof and there is no guarantee that accidents will not happen.

The moratorium has been in place since 1972, protecting our wild west coast from oil and gas exploration and exploitation. In light of the Gulf of Mexico disaster, and our coastal realities of 30-foot waves, 100-mile-an-hour winds and a couple of fault lines, I have asked the provincial government to stand up today, put the precautionary principle first and say to the federal government: "Leave the moratorium in place." Defending our coastlines from ecologically destructive development like offshore oil and gas must be part of a plan to ensure that British Columbia continues to be both beautiful and prosperous for generations to come.

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COMMUNITY EVENTS

May 12, 13 and 17th CRD Parks and Trails 10-Year Strategic Plan Public Consultation. 6-9 pm, May 12 (Otter Point Fire Hall, 3727 Otter Point Rd), May 13 (Sooke Community Hall, 2037 Shields Rd) and May 17 (Our Lady of the Rosary Parish Hall, 798 Goldstream Ave). The Regional District and a Citizen Advisory Panel are preparing a new strategic plan that will set the direction for the regional parks and trails system for the coming decade. Community engagement meetings are being held throughout the region. Get involved to ensure your ideas, values and issues are known. Special emphasis on the ex-TFL lands west of Sooke. Info: www.crd.bc.ca/parks

May 13th WorkSafe BC Public Hearing. WorkSafe BC is holding a public hearing to provide stakeholders with an opportunity to comment on their 2010 proposed amendments to the Occupational Health and Safety Regulations. 3-5 pm and 7-9 pm, Hotel Grand Pacific, 463 Belleville. Info: www.worksafebc.com (under "Announcements") or call 1-866-614-7744 to register to speak.

May 14 Drop-in Family Story Time. Juan de Fuca Branch Library 10:30-11:00 am. Fun-filled stories, songs, rhymes, and puppets. For young children and their families; children under 3 must be accompanied by an adult. Info: 250-391-0653. No registration required.

Until May 15th ArtsWave. The Sooke Fine Arts Society has just launched ArtsWave, an Arts and Cultural Mapping Project which will research and document the existing and emerging Arts, Culture and Heritage needs and resources in the Sooke Region, which includes all the communities from Beecher Bay to Port Renfrew. If you live in the Sooke Region and want to participate in this comprehensive survey, log on to their online survey at: <http://sooke.ca/EN/topnav/new/artswave.html>

Continued on page 2

