



GOVERNMENT
OF BRITISH
COLUMBIA

STRATEGIC
COMMUNICATION
PLAN



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(Government of British Columbia, 2017a)

BACKGROUND

This strategic communication plan has been prepared for the Government of British Columbia in response to the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion project.

In 2016, the Government of Canada approved a request by Kinder Morgan, a private petroleum transport company (Kinder Morgan, n.d.), to twin a pipeline between Strathcona County, Alberta and Burnaby, B.C. (Expansion project, n.d.; Smart, 2019). The added infrastructure would increase capacity of the pipeline from moving 300,000 barrels of diluted bitumen per day, to 890,000 barrels per day (Expansion project, n.d.), and increase coastal tanker traffic by seven-fold (Office of the Premier, 2018b).

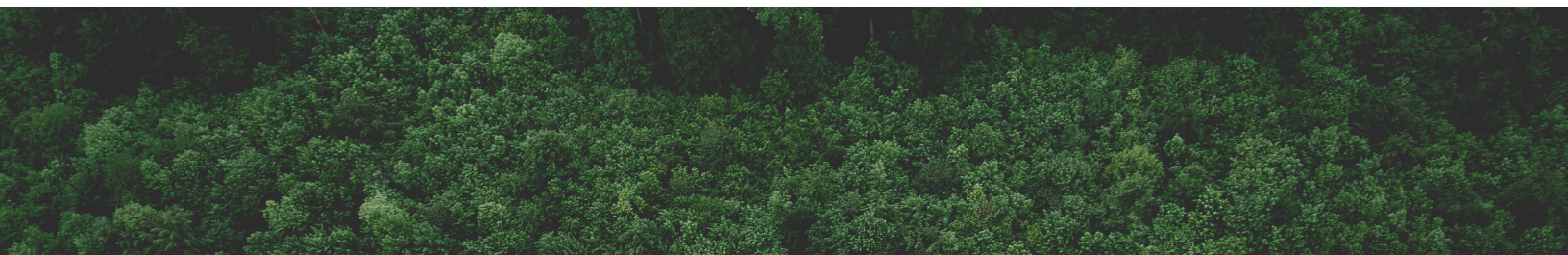
Amidst a series of legal challenges and public disagreements between itself, the federal government and the provincial governments of British Columbia and Alberta, Kinder Morgan sold the project to the Government of Canada on August 31, 2018, for a cost of \$4.5 billion (Kane, 2019; Smart, 2019).

The federal government and Alberta loudly touted the economic benefits of the expansion for all Canadians with the agreement of the National Energy Board (NEB) (Smart, 2019; Kane, 2019).

However, British Columbia said the pipeline poses a threat to the province's natural environment, livelihood of its residents and the rights of Indigenous peoples (Smart, 2019; Kane, 2019; Environment and climate change strategy, 2019). The Province's greatest fear is a catastrophic oil spill (Attorney General, 2017; Office of the Premier, 2018a; Heyman, 2018).

British Columbia's message has remained steadfast: natural resources must be developed through the process of rigorous science, in response to the threat of climate change and to preserve the natural environment, Indigenous peoples' rights and the economy (Heyman, 2018).

The Province maintains the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion creates a "disproportionate impact on B.C.'s marine coastal environment and Indigenous peoples" (Attorney General, 2017, para. 2), and a large spill has the potential to devastate the economy (Office of the Premier, 2018a).





“Tens of thousands of B.C. jobs depend on pristine coastal and inland waters,” said Premier John Horgan. “Our environment generates millions in economic activity, from tourism to film and fisheries” (Office of the Premier, 2018b, para. 3).

Therefore, the government proactively adjusted its spill regulations through the Environmental Management Act to prepare for response and recovery of a large-scale spill (Office of the Premier, 2018a). Those adjustments are currently under review (Environment and climate change strategy, 2019; Kane, 2019; Smart, 2019).

In 2016, the federal government developed the Oceans Protection Plan in case of a marine oil spill but British Columbia asserted the plan falls short of protecting southern resident killer whales, and related Indigenous culture, with impending increased tanker traffic on the coast (Heyman, 2019; Smart, 2019; Kane, 2019). Additionally, Minister of Environment and Climate Change Strategy, George Heyman, said Indigenous people were not properly consulted about the pipeline or the necessary response to a spill (Heyman, 2018).

“British Columbia is committed to true reconciliation with Indigenous peoples and, in particular, the right of Indigenous peoples to pursue development in keeping with their own needs and aspirations,” said Minister Heyman (2018). “This means an informed and meaningful opportunity for dialogue with Indigenous groups whose rights may be impacted is required” (para. 5).

As a province with deep ties to the environment, the Office of the Premier (2018c) released its CleanBC plan in December 2018, pushing for a significant reduction in pollution, increased job creation and a boost to the local economy. The Province said it aims to have residents, businesses and industry reduce reliance on fossil fuels and increase consumption of clean B.C. electricity in homes, vehicles and other buildings to build a “low-carbon economy” (para. 2). CleanBC is part of the government’s sustainability strategy to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 40% by the year 2030 (Office of the Premier, 2018c).

When addressing sustainability in the CleanBC plan, the Province does not define the term, but does tie it to the development of a sustainable future, economy, communities, managed resources, growth, jobs, energy, modes of transportation and industries (Government of British Columbia, 2018).



SITUATION ANALYSIS

The government's response to the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion and its release of the CleanBC plan has firmly positioned the Province as a steward of the environment, seeking to conserve its natural habitat while sustainably growing the economy and supporting the livelihood of B.C. residents and the rights of Indigenous peoples. However, a gap has been identified within the Province's communication strategy.

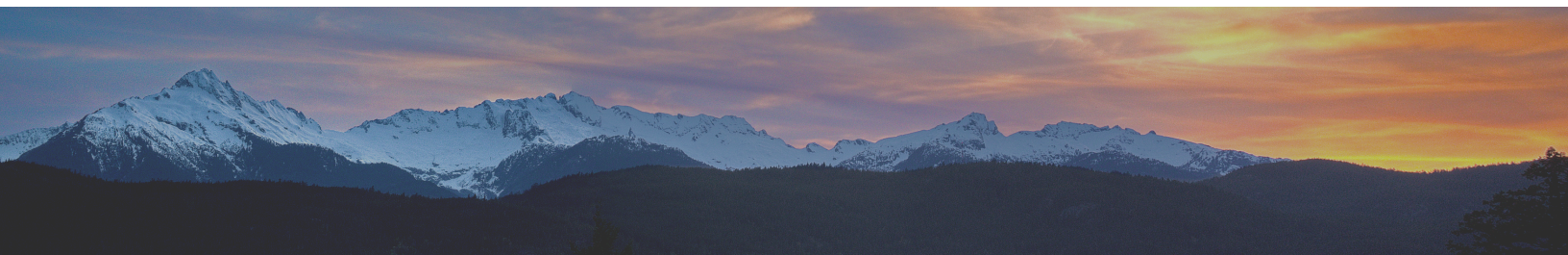
As a province that claims its top priority is to protect the natural environment and combat climate change, there is little sustainability training found within the B.C. education system to inform and enable the province's youth to be part of a future-thinking solution (Government of British Columbia, 2010; Government of British Columbia, 2018).

The Ministry of Education has developed several optional curriculum documents regarding sustainability concepts and learning outcomes for Science and Social Studies courses, however, there are only two ministry curricula (Sustainable Resources 11 and 12) which focus on sustainability holistically (Government of British Columbia, 2010). These resources -- which can be taught as individual modules or full courses -- define sustainability, identify environmental indicators (such as water quality, ecosystem diversity, human health and economic

growth) and discuss environmental ethics and social development (Government of British Columbia, 2010). They also address B.C.'s major resource industries such as agriculture, energy, fisheries, forestry and mining (Government of British Columbia, 2010).

Although some education materials have been developed, the limited number of resources creates a misalignment with the Province's message that living sustainably is vital to life in B.C. In order to drive significant change across the province, education on sustainability must begin in the formative years, teaching all children and youth what the term means and how we as humans can live integrally with the natural environment without causing damage to or reducing resources or habitats for future generations (UNESCO, n.d.). If this is a priority, the province will nurture and empower growing youth to:

- lean fulsomely into reconciliation efforts
- understand and practice ethical and intentional development of natural resources
- respond to and repair damage from natural or human-induced disasters
- help meet GHG emission reduction goals
- identify and share new perspectives on creating a healthy future for all





DEFINING SUSTAINABILITY

For the purpose of this communication strategy, the recommended definition for sustainability is: *to find a complete balance between the social, economic and natural environments that neither harms, nor depletes resources for future generations* (Thwink.org, 2014; Godemann & Michelsen, 2011).

This communication strategy will outline a plan for the Ministry of Education to work in collaboration with other government departments to develop and employ robust sustainability teaching modules for students across the province – specifically focusing on the protection of natural resources, infrastructure development, the economy, and Indigenous heritage and knowledge – to work in tandem with the CleanBC plan, empowering young leaders to take action today in order to develop a stronger tomorrow.



Ministry of
Education

(Government of British Columbia, 2017b)

AUDIENCE ANALYSIS



Key Publics

According to UNESCO (n.d.), education of youth has proven to be crucial for countries to drive sustainable development, reduce or eliminate poverty and develop equity and inclusiveness. Providing youth with skills, competencies and knowledge about sustainability and sustainable practices, in particular, helps to impart values, instill behaviours and develop critical thinking for forward-thinking solutions and responses to climate change and living in a healthy relationship with the Earth (UNESCO, n.d.). Research has shown that Canadian youth already have a positive attitude towards the natural environment and may be more open to learning about B.C.'s dependency on its natural resources than older audiences (Bastedo, Dougherty, LeDuc, Rudny, & Sommers, 2012; Coletto, 2016; Mcgrane, 2015).

Therefore, the key publics identified for this communication strategy include the British Columbia Ministry of Education and students in grades 2 through 12 in the B.C. education system (Government of British Columbia, 2010).

Key Supporters

The following government ministries have been identified as key supporters, as they will play a crucial role in developing the curriculum for the Ministry of Education by providing background and scientific research for individual modules:

- Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy
- Ministry of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources
- Ministry of Jobs, Trade and Technology
- Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation

Additional supporting publics have been identified as:

- Teachers, administrators and school boards who will implement the recommended curriculum
- Indigenous people living within the region now identified as British Columbia

This plan anticipates additional support from B.C. industry representatives, such as tourism, film, and fisheries, as well as environmental groups and Indigenous populations with a focus on sustainable practices (Office of the Premier, 2018b; BC Sustainable Solutions, 2019; Assembly of First Nations, 2019).



Key Opponents

As per the background information provided in this report, key opponents have been identified as:

- Government of Canada
- Government of Alberta
- other provincial governments that support the federal government's position as it relates to the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion project
- resource extraction industry members

“TENS OF THOUSANDS OF B.C. JOBS DEPEND ON PRISTINE COASTAL AND INLAND WATERS. OUR ENVIRONMENT GENERATES MILLIONS IN ECONOMIC ACTIVITY, FROM TOURISM TO FILM AND FISHERIES.”

PREMIER JOHN HORGAN

(Office of the Premier, 2018b, para. 3).

GOAL OF THE PLAN

To educate British Columbia's students about the provincial government's position on infrastructure development (such as the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion) and the importance of protecting the natural environment, economy and Indigenous People's rights.

OBJECTIVES

For all Grade 2-12 youth trained under the Ministry of Education:

- 1) To increase 40% of students' knowledge by June 2022, of the B.C. Government's commitment to protect its land and coastal environments.
- 2) To increase 40% of students' knowledge by June 2022, of the B.C. Government's commitment to uphold Indigenous People's rights.
- 3) To increase 40% of students' awareness by June 2022, as to the economic risks and benefits associated with infrastructure development and its impact on the natural environment.





(Office of the Premier, 2018c)

MESSAGE STRATEGY

The Government of British Columbia must establish a comprehensive proactive approach to its academic sustainability messaging. This can be done through sustainability communication, which is “the discourse surrounding how people perceive and interact with the natural environment and the long-term impacts these interactions have on the Earth’s longevity” (Williams, 2019, p. 1). Sustainability communication is a dynamic and complex process and requires that sustainability be presented as a holistic subject matter, to be interwoven through the majority of the B.C. education curricula.

This plan recommends the use of a long-term reframing strategy. This strategy intends to shift the current discourse from a concentration on maintaining natural and social capital (Geo Takach, personal communication, May 15, 2019), to incorporate a collectivist framework that

KEY MESSAGE

The Government of British Columbia’s top priority is to secure the livelihood of all B.C. residents through the protection of the environment, economy and Indigenous People’s rights.

focuses on the interdependence of the environment, economy, social structure and Indigenous People’s traditions and knowledge. Current framing around these topics isolates the concepts as individual issues, when in truth, environmental, economic, and social issues (such as the Trans Mountain Pipeline expansion proposal) are public problems that require integrated messaging strategies to illustrate their interconnectedness.

A vital component of the reframing strategy is the language (or discourse) surrounding sustainability. While words themselves are not responsible for reframing a topic, they are powerful motivators in activating intended frameworks (Lakoff, 2010; Blythe, Daigle, & Baird, 2019).



The messaging within this plan will display vivid and emotive language to forge an emotional connection with the audience.

Additionally, there will be a focus on changing the long-term phrasing around the topic of Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK), which encompasses stories, oral traditions, beliefs, traditions, and worldviews regarding issues of sustainability originating from local and Indigenous communities (Gómez-Baggethun, Corbera, & Reyes-García, 2013). Instead of language that reduces this knowledge to primitive beliefs, words such as knowledgeable, respected, and enhance (among others) will be used in tandem with TEK teaching to reframe the audience's perspective (Gómez-Baggethun, Corbera, & Reyes-García, 2013).

Furthermore, messaging appeals are a crucial factor within the reframing process. The factual proposition of this strategy states that infrastructure development such as the Trans Mountain Pipeline expansion poses a threat to social, environmental, and economic sustainability within B.C. (Smart, 2019; Kane, 2019; Environment and climate change strategy, 2019).

Historically, liberally-leaning people have been unsuccessful in relying solely on rationality and justice in framing ecological and sustainability issues (Lakoff, 2010). While rational appeals are necessary to lay the groundwork, plans need to incorporate emotional appeals to build relationships with audiences (Smith, 2017). This plan includes an appeal to positive emotions by asserting the social, environmental, and economic benefits of no pipeline expansion. It also includes an appeal to negative emotions by applying a moderate level of fear into the messaging, focusing on the adverse social, environmental, and economic repercussions of a catastrophic oil spill, should infrastructure such as the pipeline expansion be completed.

TACTICS

The following two tactics are to be started immediately following approval of this plan.

- Ministry of Education to collaborate with provincial ministries listed under key supporters to develop grade school curricula encompassing sustainability by September 2021, to align with the B.C. government's stance on protecting the natural environment, economy and Indigenous People's rights.
- Mandate all B.C. school boards to invite Indigenous community leaders to share the value of Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) with students.





The following tactics apply to curriculum to be developed for specific grades, to be employed fully by September 2022. (All modules and curriculum developed will be branded with the Province of British Columbia logo.)

Grade 2

- Develop stories (written and oral) about environmental history in British Columbia, Indigenous People's history and rights, and the community framework of sustainable development and practices.
- Mandate field trips to government parks and services to demonstrate a tactile learning environment, illustrating what the provincial government is doing to protect the natural environment.

Grade 4

- Define Indigenous TEK and demonstrate how this body of knowledge is crucial to understanding how to protect the natural environment and Indigenous People's rights
- Introduce examples of sustainable infrastructure and development projects.

Grade 7

- Ensure alignment between courses in science and social studies to highlight the interdependencies between humans and

the natural environment, including B.C. residents' economic reliance on the natural environment in the tourism, film and fisheries industries.

- Introduce a sustainable development and infrastructure module within home economics, carpentry and joinery classes.

Grade 9

- Ensure alignment between courses in science and social studies to highlight the positive and negative impacts of resource extraction on B.C. industries such as agriculture, energy, fisheries, forestry, mining, film and tourism.
- Develop a module for environmental studies about how to respond to and recover from a major environmental disaster such as an oil spill.

Grades 11 and 12

- Change the Sustainable Resources 11 and 12 courses from optional curricula to mandatory.



PLAN EVALUATION

The following indicators will be used to evaluate the success of all three noted objectives:

Indicator 1: The number of Grade 2-12 students who achieve a passing grade on standardized provincial exams, specifically for sections focused on the B.C. government's commitments to protect its land and coastal environments; government policies to uphold Indigenous rights; and concepts highlighting the economic impacts of infrastructure development and resource extraction.

Indicator 2: The number of positive feedback reports received from teachers, administrators and school boards regarding curriculum changes that reflect the B.C. government's commitment to protect its land and coastal environments, Indigenous rights and economic livelihood.

Indicator 3: The number of positive attitudes and opinions in regards to the environment and B.C.'s interdependency on the environment, which are retrieved during a Census from students who've graduated post curriculum changes.

Rationale: Three indicators indicate three different levels of awareness.

Indicator 1 demonstrates that students adequately understand sustainability concepts in relation to government policy and commitment to protecting its environment, Indigenous rights and B.C.'s economy.

Indicator 2 reaffirms that support from teachers, administrators and school boards exists and that changes are being implemented.

Indicator 3 establishes whether there is long lasting awareness of B.C.'s key message after students have graduated from the new curriculum.



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