

Rally & Open House Opposing Shipbreaking in Baynes Sound

For immediate release

Union Bay, British Columbia, Canada (April 28, 2023) - On Sunday, April 30th [Union Bay Community Hall](#) will host a family-friendly open house and rally to address the controversial shipbreaking issue threatening to pollute the critical ecosystems and fisheries of Baynes Sound, Vancouver Island. The open house will run between 11am to 3pm, with the rally taking place from 12 noon to 1pm featuring speakers such as: [Gord Johns, MP for Courtenay-Alberni](#), [Daniel Arbour, Director for Comox Valley Regional District](#), and Sydney Dixon, Marine Specialist for [Pacific Wild](#). Many local and neighbouring Vancouver Island residents will come together and learn why shipbreaking is considered one of the world's most dangerous industries for humans, wildlife, and the environment.

Since Deep Water Recovery Ltd., began operating over two years ago, local government, residents, [K'omoks First Nations](#), national and [international environmental agencies](#) have been opposing this open, shallow beach operation. The Comox Valley Regional District [applied to the BC Supreme Court in April 2022](#) for a permanent [injunction to stop shipbreaking activities](#) on the land which are not permitted under the bylaws. The operation is located in a federally declared ecologically and biologically sensitive area that significantly contributes to the province's shellfish industry and is home to one of the [last commercial herring fisheries](#).

Dr. Vicki Marlatt, SFU environmental toxicologist, states that based on Ministry of Environment documents dated Dec. 8, 2022 this shipbreaking site has no provincial authorization for discharging of waste under the Environmental Management Act. On [three occasions in 2022 Environmental Protection Officers](#) have tested unlined waste storage basins discharge in the ocean and found that levels of several metals (such as copper, lead, zinc, cadmium) exceeded the allowable BC Water Quality Guidelines. Regardless of whether this site obtains an authorized discharge permit that would typically allow higher levels of toxic substances to be released, the ongoing discharge of shipyard wastes such as metals will result in metal accumulation in sediment, soil, water and wildlife in this area or some 'downstream' since metals can dissolve in water and do not degrade." Dr. Marlatt concludes that "considering the site is in such close proximity to a residential area, the transport of asbestos, via air and increased exposure for local residents is also of grave concern."

The time has come for concerned citizens, First Nations, politicians, national and international environmental agencies to work together to make their voices heard by the Canadian governments, both federal and provincial. If we are to have a healthy environment for both humans and wildlife, it is imperative to have more stringent regulations for containment of shipbreaking wastes, avoid ecologically sensitive areas and minimize human exposure to hazardous waste contaminants.

The [event organizers](#) understand that shipbreaking is necessary and could contribute to a circular economy but only in a deep water port with containment, and strict enforcement of [established international regulations for responsible shipbreaking](#). The province of British Columbia needs to take action by revoking the foreshore lease for non-compliance which currently allows a hazardous waste shipbreaking site in Baynes Sound.