

The Roberts Bank Terminal 2 Project

The Roberts Bank Terminal 2 Project is a proposed container terminal in Delta, B.C. that is needed to ensure Canada is able to meet its trade objectives through to the mid-to-late 2030s. The project is currently undergoing a federal review by an independent panel.



Environmental studies

What we've done

Building on decades of already available environmental study of Roberts Bank, the Vancouver Fraser Port Authority commenced in 2011 a program that included over 77 individual studies, resulting in over 35,000 hours of fieldwork by over 100 professional scientists.

In response to requests made during consultation, the port authority made the terms of reference for the field studies available on the project website. The port authority continues to distribute regular notifications to inform local governments, Aboriginal groups and the public about new environmental studies and ongoing environmental work being undertaken in their communities.

Technical advisory groups

In 2012 and 2013, the port authority established four technical advisory groups, comprised of local and international scientific and technical experts with specialized knowledge from regulatory agencies, academic institutions, non-governmental organizations, and consulting firms.

The purpose of the groups was to improve the relevance, quality, rigour, and completeness of studies and information submitted as part of the Roberts Bank Terminal 2 Project Environmental Impact Statement, required as part of the federal review. Each group provided expert advice on one of four key environmental components in the Roberts Bank ecosystem, including:

- Biofilm and shorebirds
- Coastal geomorphology
- Productive capacity
- Southern resident killer whales

Experts reviewed existing information and field study work plans, identified priority information needs and appropriate methods of impact assessment, and made recommendations to the port authority.

What we found

The conclusion of the comprehensive environmental studies carried out by the Vancouver Fraser Port Authority for our environmental impact statement is that, after the implementation of mitigation, the Roberts Bank Terminal 2 Project is not expected to result in any significant adverse environmental effects. The port authority is confident that potential adverse effects can be fully or partially avoided or reduced through project design and the implementation of environmental management plans.



Environmental study highlight

Western sandpipers and biofilm

Western sandpipers and Roberts Bank

The Fraser River Estuary is a main stop for the western sandpiper population as they migrate from California to Alaska. Each spring, the typical annual peak of sandpipers during northern migration is close to 150,000 birds, with Roberts Bank supporting a population of approximately 600,000 western sandpipers annually during northward migration.

Western sandpipers and biofilm

Biofilm is a thin, dense slimy layer of predominately organic substances that coats some intertidal mudflats. Studies suggest that at Roberts Bank, approximately 30 to 65 per cent of the sandpiper's diet is comprised of biofilm; the remaining diet is comprised of marine invertebrates.

Study results

With our work in the development of the Roberts Bank Terminal 2 Environmental Impact Statement, and three years of additional studies since the submission of the statement, we've thoroughly studied biofilm, recognizing it's an important food source to the western sandpiper.



The results of the studies conducted from 2012 to 2017 show that the proposed placement of the terminal in deep water far from shore minimizes the effects to western sandpiper feeding areas, and there will be a surplus of biofilm available for the western sandpiper population.

Modelling suggests that if the Roberts Bank Terminal 2 Project is built, there will be enough biofilm to support one million western sandpipers at Roberts Bank on any given day.

What we're continuing to do

Studies conducted since the submission of the environmental impact statement

Since the submission of the project environmental impact statement to federal authorities in March 2015, the port authority has conducted additional studies based on feedback and engagement with Aboriginal groups, local communities, environmental groups, and government agencies, and we have submitted over 3,000 pages of additional information to the independent federal review panel.

Ongoing environmental assessment

As part of the Government of Canada environmental assessment process, the results of our environmental studies are being evaluated by a federally-appointed independent review panel. The review panel will evaluate our findings and make a recommendation to the minister of environment and climate change.

For more information

Please visit portvancouver.com/RBT2 or call 604.655.9337