



## Written Submission – 2020 Pre-Budget Consultations - House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance

Clear Seas Centre for Responsible Marine Shipping

**Recommendation:** That the government of Canada renew its funding commitment to the Clear Seas Centre for Responsible Marine Shipping Society (Clear Seas) in the form of **\$500,000 - \$700,000 per year in operational funding over the next three years** to enable it to continue to provide impartial evidence-based information concerning sustainable marine shipping in Canada.

## **About Clear Seas**

Clear Seas is an independent not-for-profit research centre that promotes safe and sustainable marine shipping in Canada. It serves the public interest by providing impartial information on marine shipping to policy makers and the public. Clear Seas' mandate is to initiate and interpret research, analyze policies, identify best practices, share information and facilitate dialogue. Its fundamental premise is that better information leads to better decisions.

Clear Seas' research focuses on the human, environmental and economic impacts of marine shipping. That includes practices for safe handling of bulk commodities at marine terminals, impacts of oil and liquefied natural gas shipping, spill prevention and response, impacts on coastal and Indigenous communities, and much more.

The organization collaborates with Indigenous groups, stakeholders and experts to identify knowledge gaps, share results of existing studies, and facilitate new research to ensure decision makers have access to accurate, up-to-date information. All of its reports and findings are available for free to the public at [www.clearseas.org](http://www.clearseas.org).

Clear Seas was conceived by a group of engaged stakeholders from industry, government, academia and First Nations in 2013. Its creation was led by the Port of Vancouver and launched publicly on 06 July 2015. Clear Seas' initial funding was provided by Transport Canada, the Government of Alberta, and the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers.

## **Clear Seas Value Add**

In an era marked by eroding trust and growing division over environmental concerns and resource development, citizens have access to more information than ever – but the level of knowledge and understanding has, in some ways, diminished. The outlook of the shipping sector relies on establishing and maintaining a fact-based dialogue with Canadians that serves the public interest about a largely invisible, yet essential, industry.

Clear Seas' mission is to analyze the ongoing viability and growth of the marine shipping sector by contributing to and encouraging honest conversations (with the public and policy-makers), furthering a commitment to continual improvement, and promoting values of safety and sustainability.

Clear Seas is well-recognized as a trusted and reputable voice on issues related to safe and sustainable marine shipping. It has covered a number of key public policy topics ranging from who pays for an oil spill, liquefied natural gas and marine shipping, the effects of underwater noise on marine mammals, air

pollution resulting from ships and the movement of oil tankers in Canada's waters. Its most recent research on the *Availability of Tugs of Opportunity (TOO) in Canada's Pacific Region* is a timely analysis of the availability of commercial tugs to assist disabled vessels to safety before they run aground.

Fundamentally, the organization:

- Provides decision-makers with quality materials required to take informed decisions;
- Promotes the continual improvement of the shipping industry;
- Improves public understanding and confidence; and
- Presents an authoritative and impartial, trusted voice.

Clear Seas' independent fact-based approach can support policy makers to help build public trust and confidence in shipping as a safe and essential element of Canada's well-being and prosperity. This includes enhancing the safety of the movement of petroleum and other products by ship. Dedicated to continual improvement, Clear Seas addresses stewardship and sustainability issues related to the seagoing link of a supply chain that spans ports, rail, road and pipelines to move commodities. Clear Seas helps to bring differing views together by providing a consensus around agreed facts on which to base decisions.

Clear Seas is not an advocacy group. Its value rests primarily in its ability to gain public trust through impartial research and communications. It will not generally take positions on ongoing projects. It will, however, help to address risks associated with different activities in an objective evidence-based way in order to counter and dispel false information offered by others in support of their advocacy efforts. Clear Seas' processes are transparent and all of the information that it generates is publicly available.

## **Research and Public Policy Making**

Clear Seas conducts research into timely and relevant issues as opportunities present themselves and as stimulated by world events. Clear Seas' research is conducted through academic institutions, contractors and other subject matter experts. It is intended to help generate sound, practical solutions to recognized problems and issues. Its research projects are developed in concert with stakeholders, vetted by a Research Advisory Committee composed of subject matter experts from academia and industry and approved by its Board of Directors. It has published seven research reports on marine shipping in Canada to date on aspects ranging from polls of Canadians' attitudes, to studies on spill response in ports and the Pacific, to examinations of risks and the value that Canadians derive from shipping.

Clear Seas' research materials and products have also been used extensively in the public policy making process across Canada. Transport Canada and the Canadian Coast Guard have considered Clear Seas' work in the formulation of policies and changes to procedures drawing on our studies and other work. Two of Clear Seas reports – on vessel drift and on Emergency Tow Vessel (ETV) requirements figure prominently in a Canadian Coast Guard needs analysis of Emergency Towing Vessels. Clear Seas was also invited to provide evidence to the House of Commons and Senate Committees examining Bills C-86 and C-48.

Non-governmental groups also regularly cite Clear Seas work as an authority on marine shipping issues. Both the Chamber of Marine Commerce and the BC Chamber of Shipping quoted Clear Seas materials in the evidence they gave at committee hearings on Bill C-86.

## **Communications and Digital Media Footprint**

Clear Seas' communications program is aimed at making complex issues accessible to the public at large, with careful attribution designed to instill confidence in its products. Clear Seas continues to grow its presence on social media and use emerging vectors through which to communicate, including its highly successful website.

Clear Seas has also become a trusted authority for media across Canada on issues related to marine shipping and the transportation of oil and gas. Clear Seas was cited as a source on oil shipped in Canadian waters in articles published in the Montreal Gazette, the Saskatoon StarPhoenix, and The Province and reporters from the CBC have contacted Clear Seas to ask questions or check facts for articles related to oil transport and capping sulfur emissions.

As an organization with a national mandate, Clear Seas continues to increase its on-line presence in both French and English. Its website hosts seven “Key Issues”

pages each dedicated to select topics of interest with a plan to produce a new page on a quarterly basis. It also produces a blog, detailed peer-reviewed research papers, and a newsletter, which counts subscribers from all areas of the country including policy makers, educators and engaged Canadians of all ages.

Since November 2016, its web site has been viewed by 114,478 people, including more than 15,000 francophones. It counts among those users more than 2,500 staff in different provincial governments, 6,400 federal government users (mostly Transport Canada and the Department of Fisheries and Oceans) and nearly 4,500 people at universities and school systems across Canada.

The organization continues to grow its social media presence and currently counts more than 5,000 followers on Facebook, more than 2,000 organizations and individuals on Twitter, and a network of 330 influencers on LinkedIn. It uses these channels to communicate the release of new research and web pages and to engage with stakeholders.

## **Indigenous Engagement**

Clear Seas will continue to develop its linkages with First Nations and Indigenous communities, initially focusing on the Pacific Coast. Gaining cooperation of First Nations to participate in Clear Seas' research projects; tailoring research to meet Indigenous needs and tailoring its communications products to better serve First Nations are high priorities, as is the adoption of an Indigenous relations and participation policy. Clear Seas has concluded an agreement to share data with the Council of the Haida Nation to support future collaboration in developing a catalogue of coastal areas which are especially sensitive to potential disturbances associated with shipping activity.

Clear Seas' leadership includes a former Chief of Tsawwassen First Nation as Vice-Chair and a marine expert from the Haida Nation on its Research Advisory Committee.

Additionally, indigenous groups have actively engaged with and promoted Clear Sea's research and products. The Council of the Haida Nation (CHN) used the findings of the Vessel Drift and Response report and openly referenced the study in the Government of Canada and CHN "Nation to Nation" talks which led to the 'Government of Canada and First Nations - Reconciliation Framework Agreement'.

The Heiltsuk Horizon also used material from one of Clear Seas' projects to support a complaint at the Canadian International Trade Tribunal against Public Services and Procurement Canada regarding the leasing of two Emergency Tow Vessels for the Canadian Coast Guard.

## **Current Financial Position**

Clear Seas has secured funding to sustain its operations into 2020. But the long-term financial sustainability of the organization remains uncertain and unsecured. Clear Seas has received seed-funding in the form of grants from the Government of Alberta and the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers, and through a contribution agreement with Transport Canada. Clear Seas currently allocates roughly 46% of its resources to research and knowledge mobilization, 27% to administration, 20% to communications, and 7% to engagement with indigenous and coastal communities.

One of Clear Seas' strategic aims is to draw funding from a broader array of funders than the three original contributors, including from various elements of the supply chain that rely on marine shipping. Clear Seas is actively pursuing government funding at both the federal and provincial levels. The organization continues to work towards its long-term objective of being totally financed through industry contribution, and is looking for medium-term government support to bridge the gap to reaching this target.

To date, the Vancouver Fraser Port Authority has indicated the intention to support Clear Seas with up to \$1 million annually for three years, provided that Clear Seas secure other sources of funding. If Clear Seas is unable to secure additional long-term funding, it will fall significantly short of the threshold needed to sustain its operations and mandate as a national organization.

## **Conclusion**

Clear Seas is well-positioned to provide evidence-based information to support current and future public policy discussions in the broad sector of marine shipping. Its ability to analyze and synthesize complex issues into accessible communication products can assist in building confidence in and support for the continual improvement of a safe shipping industry – a key element of Canada's supply chain.