

Danielle Smith: Exposing B.C.'s environmental hypocrisy

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Kinder Morgan Trans Mountain Expansion Project's oil storage tank farm is seen in Burnaby, B.C., on Friday, Nov. 25, 2016.

THE CANADIAN PRESS/Jonathan Hayward

All right British Columbians. I have had it up to my eyeballs with your willful blindness to environmental issues in your own province.

So, as of now, I am a charter member of the Facebook Page "Save BC's Environment" – the purpose of which is to highlight the many real and pressing environmental issues that your political leaders refuse to take action on.

Let's start with Thursday's investigative report from Star Metro which found that British Columbia is the nation's worst offender when it comes to allowing untreated sewage to enter Canadian rivers and oceans.

LISTEN: Danielle talks to The Star Vancouver reporter Ainslie Cruickshank about untreated sewage



Danielle Smith



Sewage dumping

12:16

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Of the 120 million cubic metres per year in Canada as a whole, British Columbia is responsible for nearly one-third of the problem. That's right.

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That's 45 billion litres of sewage filled with toxins, heavy metals, microplastics, pharmaceuticals, bacteria and pathogens being dumped into clean water. That's about 1,900 tankers worth— if you care to do the math on it.

It doesn't include the deliberate dumping of raw sewage by places such as Victoria. This is because of comingled storm sewer and sewer systems getting overwhelmed because of too much rain and runoff.

LISTEN: Danielle rants about B.C. sewage treatment



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Danielle talks about sewage dumping

20:50

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In Calgary, the equivalent measure is zero. That's because Calgary made the decision to separate its two systems back in the 1960s. This is something British Columbia doesn't intend to complete until 2050.

And what are the consequences of failing to treat raw sewage?

Well, mussels end up getting contaminated with pharmaceuticals. Residents get sick from the Norovirus

from eating contaminated oysters. Cholera – yes cholera – starts turning up in coastal communities.

But, untreated sewage may be the least of B.C.'s environmental problems.

WATCH BELOW: Is it time for the government to take a hard line against BC over the Kinder Morgan pipeline?

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B.C. has created an international incident with its embarrassing handling of mine management and cleanup. Alaskans have asked their government to deal with the Tulsequah Chief Mine in northwest B.C., which is leaking acid waste into one of the richest salmon runs in the region – and has been for 60 years.

Or how about the ongoing problems from the Mount Polley mining disaster? That's where the mine's tailings dam broke and spewed 24 million cubic metres of mining waste into adjacent lakes and rivers.

And who will clean up the toxic mess left behind in B.C.'s 1,800 abandoned mines?

What about current polluters? The top 10 polluters in B.C. are spewing out nitrogen oxides, sulphur dioxide, volatile organic compounds and particulate matter; all of which can impact human health and aggravate respiratory conditions.

The Prince George Pulp and Paper and Intercontinental Pulp Mills are the biggest polluters of water with sulfur and manganese. Teck Metals Ltd. emits lead, selenium and arsenic.

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That's not all. How many of those regions with 1,000-year-old trees targeted for clearcutting will ever be effectively reclaimed?

British Columbians: you should ask all those foreign-paid environmental activists why they are spending all their time focusing on the miniscule risk of a tanker spill when they have all these other issues they could be rallying support to address.

Perhaps it's because the opposition to Kinder Morgan's Trans Mountain pipeline expansion isn't really about protecting the environment at all.

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