



Libby Davies

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July 2012



Libby's concern over the closure of the Kits Coast Guard Station

Dear Neighbours,

I know that many of you are concerned about the impending closure of the Kitsilano Coast Guard Station in Vancouver, and how this may endanger lives, perpetuate unemployment, and compromise the safety of our coastline. Federal New Democrats are taking this matter very seriously.

In recent weeks, I had the opportunity to comment on the closure of the Kitsilano Coast Guard Station and its immediate impact on BC:

"We know that 5 million people travel through Vancouver's harbour each year...The federal government should not be relying on a small volunteer operation to basically shoulder the responsibility that the Coast Guard and the federal government have"

– Libby speaking in Parliament, June 6, 2012.

My colleagues Jack Harris, MP, and Fin Donnelly, MP, attended a public forum in Vancouver on May 31, 2012, giving people the opportunity to express the impacts this closure will have on our province. The Conservative government has done no consultation examining the impacts of this closure on the safety of Canadians. As so eloquently said by Katrina at the public forum:

"There is no political, economic, social, moral, or nautical justification which would warrant the closing of this base; not one. Any politician suggesting there is - has misunderstood grossly some or all of the reasons which compel this location to remain open. If this station is closed lives will be lost, full stop. Any politician suggesting otherwise is in grave error and in gross neglect of their duty as a public servant".

This cost-cutting measure by the Conservative government is unacceptable to the NDP and is unacceptable for British Columbians. I am pleased to include a letter by members of the NDP BC Caucus written to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans expressing our concerns.

Sincerely,

Libby Davies, MP Vancouver East

**libby
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June 7, 2012

Hon. Keith Ashfield
Minister of Fisheries and Oceans
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6

Dear Minister,

As the New Democratic Party Members of Parliament in British Columbia, we write to you regarding the Conservative government's plan to close the Kitsilano Coast Guard Station in Vancouver.

We are concerned that this reckless cut will place people at risk and endanger the lives of Canadians. The Kitsilano Coast Guard Station is one of the most active in the country, servicing between 200-300 distress calls per year in Canada's largest port. Most of these calls deal with emergency situations, such as person in water, medical responses, suicides and fires.

The closure of the Kitsilano Coast Guard Station will double rescue response times, as the closest station rescue boat would now have to travel 17 nautical miles from Sea Island to Vancouver. This cost-cutting measure is unacceptable to British Columbians.

Billions of dollars worth of goods travel through the Vancouver Harbour every year. As your government continues to push for increased oil tanker traffic through the Burrard Inlet, we need to ensure that there are resources in place in the event of a catastrophic spill.

We understand that your government failed to consult with stakeholders about this short-sighted decision. The Government of British Columbia, the City of Vancouver, and various recreational boating labour and commercial fishing organizations have spoken out that they were not consulted before this closure was announced.

We believe the closure of the Kitsilano Coast Guard station poses a significant risk to Canadians. The Canadian Coast guard is essential for marine safety on BC's coast and the Conservatives' plan to shut down the Kitsilano Station is alarming.

The federal government has a responsibility to provide these essential services. We consider this to be an abdication of those duties. We urge you to reconsider this decision and keep the Kitsilano Coast Guard Station open.

Sincerely,

The NDP BC Caucus



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