

The HangLine

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Robert Bateman - Not A Pretty Picture Reprinted from notankers.ca

Renowned wildlife artist Robert Bateman took a deep breath as he took a brush of black poster paint and lashed it across one of his favourite pictures.

"It was a little difficult," he said in an interview today from his home on B.C.'s Saltspring Island.

But the dripping black paint, covering the images of whales and seabirds, graphically illustrates what he thinks would happen if there was an oil spill in the B.C. waters which provide Bateman with much of his inspiration.

"It would be lights out for thousands of living things. Faded to black, to extinction," Bateman says in a video posted on YouTube, which he produced with the Dogwood Initiative, a Victoria-based environmental group which is trying to keep oil tankers out of northern B.C. waters.

The video shows Bateman talking about the abundance of coastal life, from shellfish to grizzly bears, and as he blots out the

images, his fear of disaster striking the coast.

"We have to think about what can happen to thousands of organisms if there is an oil spill, and we know these can be treacherous waters, from what happened to the Queen of the North and the Exxon Valdez," he said.



Fears over tanker traffic in B.C. waters have escalated since Enbridge Inc. last





month rekindled plans for a \$4-billion pipeline from the Alberta oil sands to Kitimat. If the pipeline was approved, the port would be expanded and crude oil shipped by tanker to overseas markets.

Bateman said rapid expansion of the polluting tar sands is a huge environmental worry.

"It's going ahead at this insane pace," he said. "I would like to see us step back and calm down. Why spend extra money right now on producing more carbon for the planet? I am against the whole thing from beginning to end and an oil spill is just the end product."

Dogwood Initiative spokesman Charles Campbell hopes the video persuades people to sign an online petition at www.notankers.ca, asking the federal government to legislate a ban on tankers in northern B.C. waters.

Policies forbidding oil-tanker traffic have been in place since 1972, but the moratorium has never been formally written into legislation.

There is no benefit to the people of B.C. in allowing supertankers, and inevitable spills, into waters which support the fishing industry and coastal communities, Campbell said.

"People make mistakes and accidents happen and in that area, there's no way to mitigate the damage," he said.

~ DFP

