

THE TRANS MOUNTAIN PIPELINE

Archaeological Losses and the Need for Redress



In 1952–53, the building of the original Trans Mountain pipeline damaged and destroyed at least 58 Indigenous archaeological sites – including village sites and burial grounds. It is unclear if proper redress was granted for these losses, which could now result in specific claims against the federal government.

The original Trans Mountain Oil Pipeline Company was established under a Special Act of Parliament on March 21, 1951, six months before it became legal for Indigenous peoples to hire lawyers. The pipeline was approved on December 13, 1951, following a three-day closed hearing that involved no Indigenous consultation or archaeological assessment.

"A striking example of wanton and thoughtless destruction"

– Charles Borden, the "grandfather of Canadian archaeology," after visiting a village site decimated by the construction of the pipeline.

ABOUT SPECIFIC CLAIMS

Specific claims arise when Canada failed to uphold its lawful obligations related to Indigenous reserve lands, assets, and treaties. Potential claims from these Trans Mountain heritage losses represent a massive financial liability for Canada that has yet to be factored into public accounting for the pipeline or its expansion.



Source: Trans Mountain ULC

"Our research into the impacts on archaeological sites along the original Trans Mountain pipeline shows that the damage was severe and widespread," said Chief Dalton Silver, co-chair of the BC Specific Claims Working Group.

"The losses to Indigenous heritage are a staggering violation of our international human rights," said Kukpi7 Judy Wilson, BCSCWG co-chair. "We cannot stand by and accept this destruction of our lands and histories."

The UBCIC BC Specific Claims Working Group is a group of Indigenous leaders who work to advance justice for BC Indigenous Nations whose lands and assets have been damaged or lost.

To learn more about these historical losses and Canada's liability, or if your Nation was one of those affected by the pipeline construction and you'd like to learn about specific claims, please email us at bcscwg@ubcic.bc.ca.

[BCR Wording TMX and Claims](#)