Pacific Access: Overview of Transportation Options
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While not a recent concept, oil tankers mooring off British Columbia's west coast have caused quite a stir. In fact, oil tankers have been loading crude off the west coast since the 1,150 kilometre Trans Mountain Pipeline (TMX) opened in 1957. Thus far, Kinder Morgan's Westridge Terminal remains the only oil terminal on Canada's west coast.

This, however, may change.

There are currently 3 pipeline proposals and a rail proposal to transport crude oil from Alberta's oil sands to the west coast. All aforementioned proposals require marine terminals to be built to transport crude oil to energy-hungry Asian markets. As such, these proposals are drawing a lot of attention—from industry, environmental groups, First Nations and various governments.

This study provides an overview of transportation options, as well as explores and investigates oil tanker and marine terminal safety. In addition to providing a background of oil tankers and the international regulatory structure that governs the safety of the shipping industry, various operational and design measures are also discussed. These mandatory measures are discussed from a Canadian perspective, exploring regulations on a national and provincial level, bringing it down to the terminal level. The latter focuses on Port Metro Vancouver (PMV)—Canada's busiest port and only marine terminal on the west coast to export crude oil—and Enbridge's proposed Northern Gateway Marine Terminal. Their unique facilities, marine environments and regulations and safety protocols governing the movement of oil tankers are examined, respectively.

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