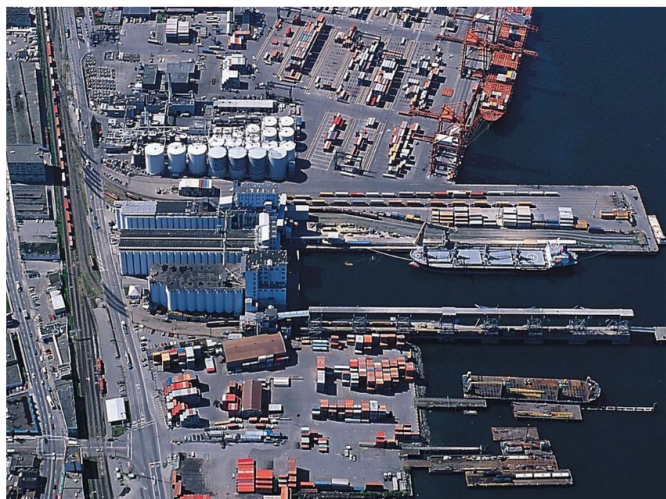


# Letters to The Vancouver Sun, Dec. 22, 2020: Port Authority responds: 'We are not forcing the agricultural sector out of the port'

*Letters to the editor: 'Trade is going to grow for decades, but because there is almost no industrial land to build or expand terminals, we have proposed a new container terminal at Roberts Bank,' writes Robin Silvester, president and CEO of the Vancouver Fraser Port Authority*

Letters to the Editor

Dec 22, 2020 • Last Updated 16 hours ago • 3 minute read



A file aerial photo of West Coast Reduction's plant (round white tanks) on the south side of Vancouver Harbour. PHOTO BY HANDOUT /PNG files

Re: [Container terminals or homegrown agriculture](#)

Industry special interests wish to disparage the port authority to secure a new lease for a privately owned food waste processing and manufacturing plant in Vancouver, and unfortunately former premier Mike Harcourt didn't reach out to the port authority for the other side of the story. We are not forcing the agricultural sector out of the port.

Grain shipments are up about 25 per cent this year, and the agricultural sector has been driving significant growth in container trade, exporting legumes, fruit, seafood, meat, and more. Port authorities are federal government agencies. We don't create trade, but we must accommodate it. We must also protect the environment and local communities from the impacts of trade — challenges with multiple competing interests. Trade is going to grow for decades, but because there is almost no industrial land to build or expand terminals, we have proposed a new container terminal at Roberts Bank. If government does not approve that project, we may have to consider modest expansions to existing Vancouver container terminals, which is not our first choice given community impacts and the restrictions of the Lions Gate Bridge.

Considering the Canada Marine Act, manufacturing operations are not core uses of port lands, something we have been telling tenants for over a decade so affected tenants have time to move their operations. Allowing businesses that are not primarily focused on international trade to occupy waterfront terminal land would be an abdication of our federal mandate.

*Robin Silvester, president and CEO, Vancouver Fraser Port Authority*

## Prompt payment legislation in the construction industry

As British Columbians prepare themselves for a diminished but safer holiday season, B.C.'s construction industry is patiently weathering another kind of challenge. It is a sad fact that too often small contractors are not paid promptly for the work they do. This is an especially difficult situation in the midst of the pandemic, when 180,000 tradespeople have stepped up as essential workers to keep the economy going. The majority are employed by small businesses, and many are the only earners in their households because other industries have scaled down drastically.

Several provinces have moved forward with prompt payment legislation, which acts as a deterrent to those outliers who refuse to pay what they owe. But not B.C. — at least, not yet. As Premier John Horgan and his new Cabinet take their seats in the legislature, we look to them to put people first and ensure a strong, sustainable economy by scheduling prompt payment legislation for the coming Spring 2021 legislative session. Without this step, many contractors will lack the confidence to hire, train, and invest. Others will be forced to close their doors because they simply cannot continue to act as de facto banks for big companies and owners who control the purse strings.

B.C.'s construction industry is world-class. It is the number-one employer in B.C.'s goods sector, and it is hard at work. Let's make sure our contractors and their teams can pay the rent each month.

*Chris Atchison, president, B.C. Construction Association; Deborah Cahill, president, Electrical Contractors Association of B.C.; Kim Barbero, CEO, Mechanical Contractors Association of B.C.*

## Vehicle safety measure when parking

Re: [Mother out walking with children dies after being hit by runaway cargo van in Surrey](#)

Reflecting on the recent tragic fatal accident in Surrey involving a large runaway van, I can't help but wonder if this horrific event could have been avoided. As a retired heavy-duty mechanic and motor vehicle inspector, this is very close to my heart. I obviously don't know the cause of this dreadful fatality, but I have first-hand knowledge of similar accidents caused by a failure to apply the vehicle's park brake, particularly on a hill. Simply putting your vehicle into "park" is relying on your faith in the transmission alone to hold your vehicle's weight.

My advice is to get into the habit of always applying your park brake before selecting park, rather than relying on your transmission alone to prevent your vehicle from moving. Incidentally, the mechanical part you are putting your faith in is a small "pawl rod" or bushing, which will obviously wear with the age of your vehicle.

Give yourself peace of mind and always apply your park brake when parking anywhere, particularly on an incline.

*Barry Robinson, North Vancouver*