

Vancouver merchant awarded \$600,000 in lawsuit over transit line

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Susan Heyes sued three levels of government for losses she said were caused by construction of the Canada Line rapid-transit project. (CBC)

A Vancouver merchant who moved her business because of problems caused by the construction of a rapid transit line has won a \$600,000 judgment against two B.C. government agencies and a construction consortium.

Susan Heyes, who owns the maternity wear store Hazel and Co., sued three levels of government, two government agencies and the company building the line after she said she lost \$900,000 and had to remortgage her home because construction of the Canada Line route stopped customers from visiting her shop.

On Wednesday, a B.C. Supreme Court judge ruled that the Canada Line project acted with cavalier disregard for the impact of its business decisions on the plaintiff.

The judge found TransLink, Canada Line Rapid Transit and InTransit BC liable for Heyes' business losses, plus costs and interest, but dismissed her complaint against the City of Vancouver and the B.C. and federal governments.



The construction of the CanadaLine block traffic along Vancouver's Cambie Street for three years. (CBC)

Heyes told CBC News the ruling has yet to sink in.

"I'm really a little bit speechless right now. My head is spinning ... I've lost a fortune over all this and now I can continue on with my work," Heyes told CBC News shortly after the ruling came down.

TransLink spokesman Ken Hardie said the transit authority and its partners on the line have not yet had time to review the 72-page decision.

Former B.C. finance minister Carol Taylor and Vancouver Mayor Gregor Robertson were both called to testify at the trial.

The construction of the rapid transit line connecting downtown Vancouver with the international airport and Richmond began in 2005 and is expected to be completed in September.