

Preface to the Application

The British Columbia (B.C.) Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (Ministry) is proposing the George Massey Tunnel Replacement Project (Project) to meet regional, provincial, and national transportation management goals. The Project involves replacement of the George Massey Tunnel (Tunnel) crossing of the Fraser River with a new bridge and replacement of three interchanges. The new bridge will be built at the same location as the Tunnel, which will be decommissioned once the bridge is open to traffic. The new bridge includes multi-use pathways for pedestrian and cycling traffic, which will connect to cycling and pedestrian networks in Richmond and Delta. The Project also includes related minor improvements to the Highway 99 corridor to support efficient use of the new crossing and interchanges, including provision of transit/high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes and transit exchanges.

An environmental assessment of the Project is required under the B.C. *Environmental Assessment Act* (B.C. *EAA*), S.B.C. 2002, c. 43, and permits to construct and operate the Project can only be received once the environmental assessment process is complete and an Environmental Assessment Certificate (EAC) has been issued. If the Project is approved, an EAC will be awarded to and held by the Ministry. The Reviewable Projects Regulation B.C. Reg. 370/2002 under the B.C. *EAA* sets out the criteria for reviewable projects. The section of the regulation that applies to the Project is:

- Part 5 (Water Management Projects): The Tunnel decommissioning may result in a change in and about the Fraser River, and in direct physical disturbance of more than two hectares (ha) of foreshore and submerged land (*Reviewable Projects Regulation*, Part 5, Table 9, Shoreline Modification).
- Part 8 (Transportation Projects): Upgrades to Highway 99 and related interchanges involves the modification of an existing public highway that results in the addition of equal to or greater than two lanes of paved public highway to an existing paved public highway over a continuous distance of equal to or greater than 20 kilometres (*Reviewable Projects Regulation*, Part 5, Table 14, Transportation Projects).

On December 16, 2015, the B.C. Environmental Assessment Office (EAO) issued a section 10(1)(c) Order confirming that the Project is a reviewable project pursuant to the B.C. *EAA*, and that it requires an EAC.

The Project as proposed is not subject to review under the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, 2012*, S.C. 2012, c. 19, s. 52, since it does not meet the definition of a physical activity under the Schedule of Physical Activities in the Regulations Designating Physical Activities SOR/2012-147.

The Application for an EAC (Application), pursuant to the B.C. *EAA*, has been prepared in accordance with the Application Information Requirements approved by the EAO on May 24th, 2016, and complies with relevant instructions provided in the section 11 Order issued by the EAO on March 7th, 2016, pursuant to the B.C. *EAA*.