

FACT SHEET

North Arm Option

Among the 14 alternate long-term fuel delivery options studied by VAFFC was building a barge offloading marine terminal on the North Arm of the Fraser River.

North Arm limitations:

- Fuel supply is limited because only small barges transporting fuel from local sources can navigate the narrow and shallow channel of the North Arm.
- A second terminal would be required to include a trans-loading facility elsewhere in the Georgia Strait or Pacific Northwest to allow receipt of larger consignments of fuel from offshore. The result is double handling of the fuel, and increases in operating cost and risk due to the operation of two marine terminals instead of one.
- Delivery frequency would be very high to meet YVR's demands. An estimated 16 to 20 barges a month would be required meet current demand, and as air service continues to grow at YVR, barge traffic would be almost constant to keep up with demand.
- The North Arm channel is extremely narrow and busy compared to the South Arm. Log booms are routinely moving near the mouth of the North Arm and unlike large vessels on the South Arm, traffic is not controlled by the Fraser River Pilots. Coordination with existing slow, uncontrolled traffic would be very difficult and impose additional risk on the operation.
- A waterfront commercial and residential area exists less than 250m immediately across the narrow channel, in direct view of the barge dock location. The virtually continuous activity at the site would be a concern to the occupants.
- The barge offloading is adjacent to recreational boat launch and dog park, and the surrounding land is preserved within the Sea Island Conservation Area.
- Spill response and recovery would be more difficult than the South Arm because the vast log booming grounds downstream of the North Arm barge dock location present a formidable obstacle in the recovery and cleanup of a potential fuel spill. The area, unlike the defined channels in the South Arm, cannot readily be boomed and protected, so the enormous timber resource in this area could effectively be quarantined in the event of a spill, causing economic loss.