

## THE SIMON FRASER STUDENT SOCIETY IN SOLIDARITY WITH SFU COMMUNITY MEMBERS DETAINED FOR PROTESTING AGAINST TRANS MOUNTAIN PIPELINE EXPANSION PROJECT (TMX)

Last month, the SFSS learned SFU student, Zain Haq, and SFU Health Sciences professor, Dr. Tim Takaro, were charged for allegedly breaching a court injunction for the Burnaby Trans Mountain Pipeline ULC expansion project (TMX). On February 15, 2022, Zain was jailed for [14 days](#) upon pleading guilty and has three more court dates in March. Dr. Takaro pleaded not guilty and will go to trial from June 13-16, 2022.

***“Civil disobedience has been an essential part of many social change movements, but it must disrupt if it is to be effective. It is not our purpose to disrupt. Our purpose is to create a profile so large that it cannot be ignored.” – Zain Haq, [National Observer](#)***

The Trans Mountain Pipeline ULC (TMX) Expansion project is the construction of an additional pipeline, a twinning of an existing 69-year-old pipeline from Edmonton to Burnaby. The project will triple capacity to move [diluted bitumen](#), going from 300,000 to 890,000 barrels of highly toxic crude oil daily with the addition of 14 [new tanks](#) (one existing tank will be replaced) in Burnaby. This would lead to a total of 26 tanks on the same 1.89-acre tank farm site directly adjacent to the SFU campus on Burnaby Mountain. As stated in a [letter](#) to the Prime Minister by SFU's Students Against TMX group, “in light of the global climate crisis, we categorically reject the expansion of the Trans Mountain Pipeline, particularly as Canada is warming at twice the rate of the rest of the world”.

As outlined in Dr. Takaro's July 2021 petition to the House of Commons, the project has a history of violating environmental regulations. Additionally, data from the Canada Energy Regulator show that in “almost all scenarios the [TMX] project will not be financially viable.” On February 18, 2022, the federal government ceased further public funding of the project as its costs soared to [\\$21.4B](#), from earlier estimates of [\\$12.6B](#) (2020) and [\\$7.4B](#) (2017). This is a 70% cost increase in just two years, with [less than half](#) of the project completed and its [timeline](#) pushed to the third quarter of 2023.

In addition, the TMX project has not received consent from all the First Nations whose territories overlap the project, including the Squamish Nation, Tsleil-Waututh Nation and Coldwater Indian Band. Therefore, the activism of Zain Haq and Dr. Takaro is not only important to SFU community members but also an essential show of solidarity as settlers on Unceded Coast Salish Territories to these Host Nations.

***“We’re in a climate emergency. In a climate emergency, disruption is required when the government is not acting in the best interest of the people and the planet.” – Dr. Tim Takaro, [Video Documentary](#)***

Dr. Takaro is a physician-scientist with decades of experience in occupational and environmental health. His research on human health and climate change is valued not only by his colleagues and trainees at the Faculty of Health Sciences but also globally. Under his leadership as a 2-term Faculty of Health Sciences Associate Dean of Research, the Faculty

formed the [Planetary Health](#) research and learning hub, which elevated the profile of this work in local and global contexts. Further, he has long worked as an anti-TMX activist and member of the Protect the Planet Coalition to ensure the safety of students, staff, faculty, residents, and Indigenous Peoples (s) on Burnaby Mountain. His efforts aim to benefit all those locally and globally endangered by the threats of the expansion project. Dr. Takaro's colleagues and students at SFU stand in solidarity with him and his dedication to protecting the planet, and they expect SFU to take the leadership to do the same.

Haq has been fighting for a livable future since he first came to Canada and started as an SFU student in 2019. He consistently puts his freedom and safety on the line to protect the people from the devastation of a 2°C rise in global average temperatures. Haq established and currently leads the civil resistance campaign [Save Old Growth](#). The campaign is a team of youth participating in peaceful, civil disobedience to pressure the BC government to end the logging of old-growth forests immediately, of which several SFU students are involved.

Both Haq and Dr. Takaro were involved in organizing a hunger strike last Fall at SFU to pressure SFU to fully divest from fossil fuels and take a clear stance against the TMX pipeline. The hunger strike garnered significant publicity and support from the SFU community. Through external pressure and eight years of activism by SFU350, [SFU committed to full divestment from fossil fuels by 2025](#), only four hours into the hunger strike.

***“SFU needs to embody its role as a climate leader to oppose a project that so clearly endangers the people they’re meant to keep safe and support their own community members who are putting themselves on the frontlines for the very same reasons.”***  
–SFU350

However, SFU has yet to put out a statement clearly stating their opposition against the construction of the TMX project or in support of Dr. Takaro and Haq. Dr. Takaro has been in discussion with SFU about the pipeline since 2014; however, only over the past seven years has SFU released [statements](#) of concern regarding the TMX, although there has been no clear opposition or acknowledgement of consequences of the project. With an increase in the total number of [tank farms](#) on Burnaby Mountain (26 total), the safety of the SFU community is at risk. Multiple risk evaluations, including one done by [Burnaby Deputy Fire Chief Chris Bowcock](#) and one by [SFU](#), have noted this increased risk. An [additional fire protection audit](#) by the Canadian Energy Regulator (CER) found that it could take up to 6 hours for a coordinated emergency response to an emergency from Trans Mountain's own firefighting team, who are located in Kamloops since there is no jurisdiction for the Burnaby Fire Department within the facility. Based on this information alone, SFU should release a statement expressing clear public opposition to the TMX project, and subsequently a statement in support of the activism of SFU community members. SFU recently declared that we are in a climate emergency and in doing so, must also recognize that significant action must be taken to protect our communities and future generations.

***“We are slow walking in a climate emergency. The university must act so we can turn the ship.”*** – Dr. Tim Takaro

Therefore, as a student society that advocates for students – especially student safety – with the guiding principles of equity, community, empowerment, and sustainability, the SFSS fully supports Dr. Tim Takaro and Zaid Haq in their efforts to stop the TMX Project and oppose the active criminalization of climate activists and Indigenous land defenders by the Trans Mountain Corporation. We stand in solidarity with those putting themselves on the front lines in the fight against climate change. We support their rights to peaceful protest and non-violent demonstration. There is no right to an injunction on the stolen lands of Indigenous People(s); they are the unceded lands of the Coast Salish Peoples. The pipeline should not be constructed without the free, prior, and informed consent from all Indigenous nations directly impacted.

We encourage the SFU Administration to amplify this statement and release a public statement of their own in clear opposition to the TMX project. In addition, we call on SFU Administration to voice their support and solidarity of the political action and peaceful civil disobedience of Zain Haq and Dr. Tim Takaro. Their actions follow in the footsteps of many social and environmental rights activists that came before them, who advocate for Indigenous rights, human safety, and a habitable planet for all.

In Solidarity,

Simon Fraser Student Society Council

SFU350