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KITSILANO COAST GUARD BASE

Statement by:

The Honourable Larry W. Campbell

Tuesday, April 21, 2015

THE SENATE

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KITSILANO COAST GUARD BASE

Hon. Larry W. Campbell: Honourable senators, I'd like to read to you a letter addressed to the Right Honourable Prime Minister Stephen Harper:

Dear sir:

My name is Sara Kalis Gilbert. My father, Captain Pieter Kalis, worked in the Canadian Coast Guard for many years, beginning in 1959, he retired in the mid-eighties. He worked on the weather ships, the ice breakers, captained the CCGS *Skidegate* through the Northwest Passage, in 1975, . . . and rounded out his career as Master of the CCGC *Rider* out of the Kitsilano Coast Guard base. He was lauded for his abilities and many of his crew members attribute their career advancements and skills to the example he set.

As a child, I heard the harrowing stories of rescue at the supper table, I heard the commentary regarding the lack of much-needed repairs and seaworthy vessels; but mostly, I heard the dedication and the desire to serve a country that he dearly loved. He was originally from the Netherlands but became a Canadian citizen with much pride. My father dedicated, and often risked, his life to aid others and to protect our environment.

He passed away a year ago, and is no longer able to carry the torch to rally for the retention of vital services in the Pacific Region. I am taking up that torch.

I realize that government cutbacks are a necessity. I realize that even small cuts, if there are enough of them,

make a difference to the overall budget. I don't understand why these cuts have to be in the form of consolidation and closure of Search and Rescue facilities; . . .

The Kitsilano Coast Guard base required approximately \$700,000 annually to function. With an increase of shipping traffic expected, the necessity of having a base there increases exponentially. Further consolidation of communication bases in the Coast Guard (the closing of the Vancouver-based communication base has a direct view over the harbour and can see what cameras' blind spots cannot will close in May) is also alarming.

At the recent oil spill in English Bay is a prime example of the requirement for a base to be located at Kitsilano. Response would have been immediate and equipment was at the ready.

The buildings remain intact. The public outcry is growing. I understand that you have stated that discussion of this matter is closed. It is my opinion that a leader should be open to reviewing a decision if circumstances change.

And they have most certainly changed on the West Coast. The letter continued:

In honour of my father's memory, and all that he did in service to his country, I ask that you reconsider your decision. I know it would show the people of Vancouver, and indeed, British Columbia, that our concerns are yours.

Sincerely and respectfully yours,

Sara Kalis Gilbert.
