

Statement

GREENPEACE

A Black Stain at the Heart of the Great Bear Rainforest: Greenpeace

15 October 2016 (Vancouver) – Early Thursday morning a tugboat pushing a large barge through Heiltsuk First Nation waters in the Great Bear Rainforest ran aground and sank. This tug and barge operation typically takes huge amounts of fuel oil to Alaska through the waters of the Great Bear Rainforest. Although the barge was empty, the sunken tug has about 190,000 litres on board. Eduardo Sousa, Senior Campaigner at Greenpeace Canada, said:

“We are of course relieved there was no loss of human life, but the impact on marine life and on the Heiltsuk Nation which depends on a healthy environment is dire and appalling on so many levels. This sunken tugboat is leaking huge amounts of diesel fuel over Heiltsuk First Nation clam beds. These clams are part of their livelihoods and sustenance.

“And, it is unacceptable that a tug boat and barge carrying huge amounts of fuel can typically travel through these precious waters and lands without being properly regulated and without a sufficient rapid response plan in place. This is now a black stain at the heart of the Great Bear Rainforest. Our hearts are with the Heiltsuk community as they work hard to save a major source of their traditional foods.”

Greenpeace once again is calling on Prime Minister Justin Trudeau to keep his promise and immediately enact a permanent ban on the west coast for oil tankers and other vessels carrying huge supplies of oil, especially through the Great Bear Rainforest.

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Media Contact:

Eduardo Sousa, Senior Campaigner, Greenpeace Canada
778-378-9955, esousa@greenpeace.org