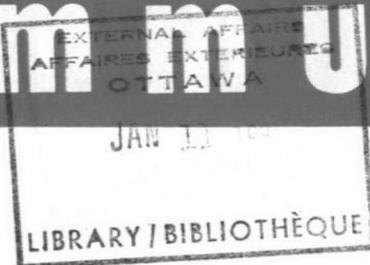




DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS  
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CANADA/USA VESSEL TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT AGREEMENT (VTM)

An Agreement for a Cooperative Vessel Traffic Management System for the Juan de Fuca Region was signed today by the Secretary of State for External Affairs, Flora MacDonald, and the United States Ambassador, Kenneth Curtis.

The Agreement provides for vessel traffic routes and a system of traffic management whereby vessels report information to, and receive information and advice from vessel traffic management centres in Canada and the USA.

This Agreement marks the culmination of more than ten years of planning and coordination, and of more than three years of inter-governmental negotiations. It is the latest in a series of cooperative measures taken over the past six years by Canada and the United States to support efficient navigation, to protect life and property, and to reduce as much as possible the environmental risk presented by tanker traffic in Juan de Fuca and Puget Sound.

The signing of this Agreement does not prejudice separate decisions as to whether, or in what numbers and sizes and by what routes, tankers should carry crude oil from Alaska to U.S. markets. Rather, it serves to put in place the safest possible traffic management system both for existing traffic (including tankers) and for additional traffic of any kind that may develop in coming years.

This VTM Agreement, when fully implemented, will provide Juan de Fuca Strait with one of the most advanced systems of marine safety to be found anywhere in the world.

A detailed press backgrounder is available upon request at the Press Office.