

## **FREEWAY POSES A HIGH RISK TO BURNS BOG**

In July, 2008, the Governments of Canada and British Columbia approved the Environmental Assessment of a freeway project, the **South Fraser Perimeter Road**, thereby agreeing to issue permits for the freeway to proceed.

The Harmonized Environmental Assessment by Canada and British Columbia was approved despite warnings from government and independent scientists that the freeway will likely cause irreversible ecological effects posing a high risk to the long-term viability and integrity of Burns Bog.

In March, 2004, in recognition of the ecological and conservation values of Burns Bog, the Governments of Canada, British Columbia, Metro Vancouver and the Corporation of Delta spent taxpayers' money to purchase 5,045 acres of the 7,413 acres of Burns Bog. The four levels of government signed a *Management Agreement* and a *Conservation Covenant* for the *Burns Bog Ecological Conservancy Area* requiring all levels of government to prevent any:

***“...proposed action that might destroy, impair, diminish, negatively affect, or alter the Land, including all natural, scientific, environmental, wildlife or plant life values or attributes...”***

Furthermore, the signatories are required to use information from the *Burns Bog Ecosystem Review (chapters 4& 7)* as a baseline:

***“3.1...from which any change in the physical character of the Bog, and the performance of any covenant in this Agreement in relation to the Bog, may be measured or assessed...”***

***3.3...for monitoring compliance with the terms of this Agreement”***

A Scientific Advisory Panel was established under the *Management Plan* to ensure protection of Burns Bog. The Scientific Advisory Panel Bog has advised that the South Fraser Perimeter Road should not be built along the edge of Burns Bog. Their concerns have been echoed by Environment Canada scientists. Collectively, the scientists warn of changes to Burns Bog that are expected to be significant and irreversible causing ecological effects that cannot be adaptively managed:

- **negative impacts to bog hydrology and water chemistry**
- **degradation of the Sphagnum ecosystem**
- **aerial disposition including the drift of particulate matter**
- **modeling based on insufficient data**
- **lack of data to determine cumulative impacts**
- **significant impacts to moss flora and tree growth**
- **high risk impacts to barn owls, waterfowl, landbirds, Red-legged Frog, the local nesting/staging of Greater Sandhill Crane population, and the “threatened” Pacific water shrew**

The Harmonized Environmental Assessment by the Governments of Canada and British Columbia failed to appropriately consider these ecological effects thereby contravening the *Conservation Covenant* on Burns Bog.