

## Environmental Priority:

# Oil Transportation Safety Act

Protecting Washington communities from the increasing threat of oil spills and rail car accidents



**Prime Sponsors: Senator Rolfes (D-23) and Representative Farrell (D-46); SB 6262 / HB 2347**

Washington's waters face risks from oil spills every day, and new proposals to move oil through our state make the threat of oil spills and accidents more urgent than ever. Right now, we are witnessing unprecedented changes in the way oil moves through the Pacific Northwest: increased use of rail, new oil terminals, additional routes across our waters, and the potential expansion of pipelines resulting in even more oil tanker traffic. All these factors increase the risk of oil spills.

### Our communities have the right to know.

Recent oil train derailments in Canada and the United States highlight the risky business of moving oil through our cities. Yet local governments, first responders, and the public lack basic information on how much, what type, and how oil is moving through their towns. Communities across the state are taking a stand and demanding more information and answers in the face of these threats.

### Our current protections are inadequate.

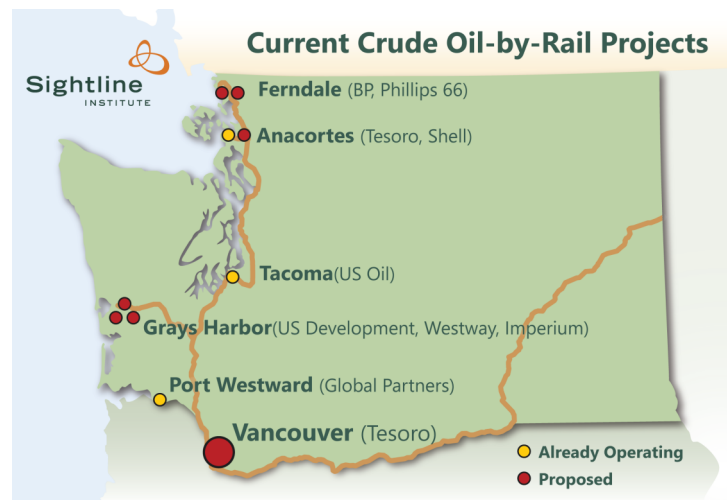
Much of the existing law governing shipments of oil over Washington waters was written in the 1970s and has not been updated to reflect new realities. Given the amount of oil already flowing through our state and with unprecedented changes looming, Washington needs additional tools to take action and protect Puget Sound, the Columbia River, and Grays Harbor.

### There are some straightforward steps we can take now.

- Facilities receiving oil must disclose basic information on oil transport to impacted communities.
- Evaluate existing emergency response plans, identify most vulnerable communities, and develop approaches to reduce these risks.
- Broaden and enhance jurisdiction for tug escort requirements to the Puget Sound, Columbia River and Grays Harbor. State decision-makers need authority to establish or enhance the requirements for tug escorts for oil tankers, one of the most effective strategies for preventing spills.
- Increase penalties for reckless behavior by tug operators, while creating incentives for tugs that tow oil barges to operate in the safest manner possible.

Preventing accidents is always the best approach, and we can do better. We must protect communities and our environment by improving our safety net of protections. The time to act and prevent future disasters is now.

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## PRIORITY ACTIONS

- ✓ Extends rule authority for tug escorts to Columbia River and Grays Harbor
- ✓ Promotes safer operation of tug and oil barges

- ✓ Discloses basic info - how much oil, what type, and where
- ✓ Evaluate emergency response plans and identify communities at greatest risk from oil rail car accidents.

**Environmental Priorities Coalition**

*A network of over 20 leading groups in WA that influence policy at the state level.*

[www.environmentalpriorities.org](http://www.environmentalpriorities.org)