

# People of Faith Support the Oil Transportation Safety Act - HB 2347

Water is sacred in all faith traditions. In the Torah, water is a blessing from God. For Christians, water is the element of baptism that welcomes us into the Church. In native traditions, the waters of Puget Sound and the rivers of our region sustain human life and spirit.

Today, because of a huge increase in the volume of oil being shipped by rail, pipeline, and tanker, **Washington's waters face unprecedented risk from oil spills and rail accidents.** God made us stewards of water as well as land, and it is our responsibility to keep the Columbia River, Puget Sound, Grays Harbor, and all of our waterways clean and healthy. Water is the source of much of our livelihood here. It is our responsibility to pass on to the next generation a state just as beautiful and healthy as the one that was passed on to us.

It is our moral obligation to keep our communities safe by ensuring dangerous industries are taking reasonable precautions. Recent oil train derailments in Canada and the United States highlight the risky business of moving oil through our cities. Our current protections are inadequate: neither the public nor first responders know when, where, and how much oil is being shipped through our neighborhoods. Washington needs additional tools to take action and protect our communities and our waterways.



Photo: Tempus Volat via Creative Commons.

**Faith Communities Support the Oil Transportation Safety Act, HB 2347**, so that we can take these steps now to protect our communities and the waterways of our region:



On July 6 a train carrying crude oil derailed and exploded, killing 47 people and destroying homes and businesses in Lac-Mégantic, Quebec.

Photo: Sûreté du Québec via Wikimedia Commons.

- Facilities receiving oil must disclose basic information on the oil: how much, what type, and transport routes.
- 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 Puget Sound, Columbia River, and Grays Harbor. State decision-makers need to be able to establish or enhance 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 the best stewardship of the gifts we have been given by God, 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. The well-being of creation in the future depends on our good choices today.

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