

PHOTO: JOHN WESTROCK

## 2019 ENVIRONMENTAL PRIORITY

# Oil Spill Prevention

Washington is a state with a robust fishing industry, a strong coastal tourism and recreation-based economy, and a world-class marine ecosystem—yet oil spills remain a critical threat to our waterways. From Long Beach to Neah Bay to the San Juan Islands, local residents and their elected representatives in Olympia are working hard to grow rural jobs and strong communities, and maintain their cultures and ways of life. These coastal communities deserve commonsense safeguards to protect their jobs, livelihoods, and the place they call home from the threat of a devastating oil spill.

## COMMONSENSE SAFEGUARDS FOR WASHINGTON COMMUNITIES

Washington faces a significant risk of oil spills in the Salish Sea and on the coast, heightened by recent trends in oil transport and the types of crude oil moving through the state. Washington state refineries are receiving crude oils that can submerge and sink, challenging spill response and recovery, while many of the vessels carrying these oils do not operate with some of the proven safeguards against spill risk required of large tankers. These risks threaten coastal jobs, cultures and livelihoods, as well as the endangered Southern Resident orcas. To address these risks and protect Washington State from the devastating impacts of an oil spill, the state must (1) extend tug escort requirements to barges and other vessels carrying crude oil, (2) establish an emergency response towing vessel that can protect high-risk areas like the San Juan Islands, and (3) ensure that oil drilling will never happen off Washington's coast.



This is one of the 2019 Environmental Priorities presented by a coalition of over twenty organizations in Washington committed to advancing strong environmental policy.

### CONTACT

For more information, contact:

Darcy Nonemacher

[darcy@wecprotects.org](mailto:darcy@wecprotects.org)

206-631-2603



DANIEL BELTRA / GREENPEACE



## 2019 LEGISLATIVE ACTIONS

### Improve safety measures for oil laden tank vessels

- Extend proven safeguards to all vessels carrying crude oil by initiating zone-based rulemaking on tug escort requirements for oil laden tank vessels, including barges, ATBs, and small tankers.
- Ensure tug escort requirements support broader Southern Resident orca recovery measures and respect tribal treaty fishing rights.

### Enhance state oil spill prevention tools with an emergency rescue tug

- Support the requirement for a stationed emergency response towing vessel (rescue tug) in a location to minimize emergency response time in the Haro Strait and other navigation lanes with the highest tank vessel traffic.

### Ban offshore drilling

- Ensure offshore drilling will never happen off of Washington's coast by prohibiting leasing of aquatic lands, tidelands, or submerged lands associated with the outer continental shelf for oil or gas exploration, development, or production.

### WHY NOW?

Washington's oil spill prevention program has not kept up with the changing risk. Over the last decade, more and more under-regulated barges and smaller tankers have been used to transport oil, while at the same time there have been changes in the type of oil moving through the state. Non-floating oils are being carried through the Salish Sea by tug and tank barges, which do not operate with the same safety regulations as oil tankers.

Updated safety measures are critical to address the current oil spill threat, while an offshore drilling ban will prevent undue risk to tribes, our coastal fishing, tourism and recreation industries, and our world-class marine ecosystem. 2019 is the 30th anniversary of the Exxon Valdez disaster, which devastated orca populations in Prince William Sound. The Oil Spill Prevention Act is Governor-request legislation that advances proven protections identified by the Orca Task Force as timely and important for our iconic Southern Resident orca population.

