

2018 ENVIRONMENTAL PRIORITY | SB 6269

Oil Spill Prevention Act

Washington faces many risks to our communities and waterways from oil spills from pipelines, trains, and vessels. Puget Sound refineries are receiving heavy oils that sink and are hard to clean up. We rely on the state's expertise to ensure that the oil industry is held accountable, has the right type of prevention measures in place and is prepared in the case of a spill. Yet, the state is falling behind in implementing proven prevention and preparedness measures for oil spills, like inspecting oil transfers and marine vessels. The state has to do better by ensuring that the Department of Ecology's Oil Spills Program has what it needs to fully implement the laws designed to keep us safe.

The legislature should pass the Oil Spill Prevention Act during the 2018 session to fill these gaps. The bill requires oil companies to pay for state oil spill prevention and preparedness work. It's only fair that the industry jeopardizing our safety pays for protections needed to manage oil that has to come to serve our existing refineries.

2018 LEGISLATIVE ACTIONS

Secure Stable and Reliable Funding for Oil Spill Prevention and Preparedness Work

- Ensure all modes of moving oil are taxed fairly. Pipelines now provide up to 40% of the overall oil moving in Washington, yet oil arriving by pipelines is not taxed in the same way as oil moving by rail or marine vessel.
- Increase the barrel tax to be more consistent with the level of California, address the current funding gap as well as create a strong foundation for future needs.

Fully Implement Marine Protections

- Direct the state to adopt rules that strengthen Puget Sound protections from situations where oils submerge and sink, which are particularly difficult to clean up.
- Hire new inspectors to conduct specialized reviews of oil transfers and vessel inspections.

Strengthen Protection Tools

- Identify recommendations for additional safety measures needed, including how to address ongoing threat of barge traffic and risk of new tanker traffic carrying heavy oils, tar sands (otherwise known as like diluted bitumen).
- Conduct a transboundary summit for Salish Sea protections.

This is one of the 2018 Environmental Priorities presented by a coalition of over twenty organizations in Washington committed to advancing strong environmental policy.

WHY NOW?

Our current spill prevention program already has a current shortfall of \$1.8 million. This is expected to increase by \$3.2 million to \$5 million in the 2019-21 biennium, if there isn't a funding fix this year. This funding gap means priority work isn't getting done to make sure our waterways and communities are safe from oil spills. At the same time, the potential for more crude oil, including heavy oils like tar sands that have proven to have long lasting and damaging impacts, is stressing our system.

CONTACT

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