

## Sacrifice Zones

Eric de Place: There is this very unique place on earth, the Pacific Northwest. It's either about to become steamrolled by coal and oil heading from North America to foreign shores or it is going to stand up in an opposition movement and prevent those projects from happening.

Nick Abraham: We're the choke point between Montana and Wyoming and exports for the rest of the world. So when these projects are trying to come through, they have to come through the heart of the Northwest.

Dan Serres: Every form of fossil fuel in one way or another has been proposed for export in the Lower Columbia River. Here we are sitting at this choke, many of us concerned about climate change, and uniquely poised to do something about it.

Chanting: No oil trains, no way, not ever, not today!

*You're listening to Sacrifice Zones, a story about the pressure to transform a region of iconic landscapes and environmental stewardship into a global center for shipping fossil fuels.*

Eric de Place: If we think about two doors in front of us: one to the left is the door we open and through that door is huge amounts of pollution in this region.

*Eric de Place is the policy director at Sightline Institute in Seattle.*

Eric de Place: We'll have the biggest coal export terminals in North America, the biggest oil-by-rail terminals in North America, biggest petrochemical refineries in the world, biggest liquefied natural gas plants in the world. The other door, we say no to all that stuff, and what we have is a Northwest that continues its environmental legacy and can continue to flourish.

Dan Serres: For a time it looked like we were going to get dozens of trains a week carrying oil and coal down the Columbia River Gorge to any one of many points on the Oregon and Washington coastline.

*Dan Serres is the conservation director with Columbia Riverkeeper.*

Dan Serres: It's an accident of geography that the lowest path from the middle of North America to Asian markets happens to be through the Columbia River Gorge, happens to be lined with people who want something better, lined with tribal fishermen whose livelihood is made between the railroad tracks and the river. It's this narrow pass that they're trying to move through and we are going to do everything we can to make sure it stays closed.

Eric de Place: The Pacific Northwest is looking at the equivalent of five or six Keystone XLs in terms of carbon throughput. That's in proposed projects that are new in the last few years. There's not a natural market for this stuff in North America so they desperately need to get this infrastructure built between Coos Bay, OR and Prince Rupert, BC, two places that most people around North America have never heard of or

never been to. But if they can't get their pipelines, their rail ports built there, they're out of luck, and so the net effect of winning all of those fights in the Pacific Northwest will be locking up a huge amount of carbon under the ground where it is safely sequestered from planetary harm.

Dan Serres: Bill McKibben came to Vancouver in 2013, right at the beginning of the oil fight and he said, your geography is your destiny, and you happen to be in this place where all of you have this really large ability to shape what comes out of the ground, what can find a market. If they can't get it through the Columbia River Gorge, maybe it has to stay in the ground. And that's where we're seeing more and more effort going into holding what Eric calls the Thin Green Line.

Eric de Place: Every time we see another wave of projects proposed, we're told that they're inevitable, we're told that they're actually good for us and we're told there is nothing we can do about them. But what's happening is the Thin Green Line is winning on every single project they're engaging on.

Nick Abraham: So far none of the projects have been able to get through.

*Nick Abraham is a research fellow at the Sightline institute.*

Nick Abraham: and I think that's a testament to how little they help both these states, but also the level of opposition they've come up against.

Eric de Place: Oregon and Washington had six coal export terminals. British Columbia had another four that were new or expanded terminals. Of those six in Oregon and Washington, four have already died. The last two are very much on the ropes. They have gone from being slam-dunk proposals, where there's nothing the locals can do, to basically begging for any attempt to get through the permitting process. We've seen everything from agricultural interests to the business community who is concerned about tying up the tracks with endless coal trains. The tribes and First Nations have engaged to an astonishing degree. Lots of neighborhood groups who just don't want to deal with that kind of pollution. So I love the fossil fuel infrastructure fights because they really do surface this notion about how bad they are for us in so many ways. It's not just about climate change. It's about 100 different things that we care about.

Cathy Sampson Kruse: It's not just our own homelands it's affecting now – all you folks!

*Cathy Sampson Kruse is member of the confederated tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation*

Cathy Sampson Kruse: The blinders have to come off. We see some of the wins that have happened based on treaty rights, on fishing rights that were so hard fought for. We know that their big shot attorneys are just milling over paperwork to try to erode some of those treaty rights now because it's been so strong in the fight against the fossil fuel infrastructure that is coming our way.

Dan Serres: The fossil fuel industry simply sees the Northwest as a throughway to pass this huge reserve of carbon in the middle of North America to the markets that want to burn it.

Eric de Place: The consequences of doing that would be to turn parts of the Northwest into, I think, sacrifice zones.

Dan Serres: A sacrifice zone is a short way to say, this is a place where we're willing to gamble, and say, okay, well, we think one derailment and spill every other year, that's okay.

Eric de Place: Any region that becomes a sacrifice zone sees a lot of the risk, a lot of the harms, but very few benefits. So, for example, the lower Columbia River could well be inundated with massive oil shipments with the attendant risks of oil spills, fires, derailments.

Eric de Place: It's very difficult to find any place on earth that is home to a big extractive economy, particularly one based around fossil fuels, that sort of looks attractive but also that is economically sustainable. Most of these places are boom and bust regions. Most of them suffer from decades if not a century of legacy pollution.

Nick Abraham: Where these places are being permitted have a need for new, long-lasting jobs and a lot of people see this as a potential boon for creating jobs in the state.

Kale Kerric testifying at Vancouver Port Commission hearing: Today I'm here to give support to the Vancouver Energy project and urge the Port of Vancouver to extend the existing lease agreement. I'm concerned that the Port of Vancouver would oppose a project that has the great potential to create hundreds of high-income careers and millions of dollars in economic benefits to constituents of this commission, the city of Vancouver and the state of Washington.

Eric de Place: The attraction that these industries sort of dangle in front of these communities is maybe it's 50 jobs but the cost to those communities of siting a big coal or oil development there is enormous. And the locals get that and in fact, what they have started to say is that, you're not going to build a coal terminal in Portland, Oregon because nobody would accept that there. You're not going to build a giant oil refinery or methanol refinery in Seattle because nobody would want it there. They're being targeted by a notoriously bad-acting industry, who wants to put this stuff in the most vulnerable places.

Pat O'Herron: No one wants to live next to a refinery, no one wants to live next to a coal-fired power plant.

*Pat O'Herron is the board president of Oregon Physicians for Social Responsibility.*

Pat O'Herron: And the people that's happened to have been poor, people of color, indigenous communities.

Eric de Place: There's been a real push to turn the Pacific Northwest and in particular, the lower Columbia River into the Gulf Coast on the Pacific, where it would be just littered with liquefied natural gas and propane by rail and oil by rail and coal terminals. And if all that stuff were to get built it would look probably a lot like the lower Mississippi River. And when you travel down the bottom 70 miles of that river below New Orleans what you see are you know, gas flares, refinery flares, you see huge coal piles on the banks of the river and you see a once rich ecological system and a once rich human community that has been systematically poisoned and abused to the point where it's barely limping along.

Nick Abraham: It's interesting that they chose to try and come through Washington and Oregon. It's almost a slap in the face to the reputation that these states have.

Eric de Place: Over the years there has been heavy industry on the Columbia and we've seen some of the negative effects of that. We've also seen the effects of damming the river for hydroelectricity.

Dan Serres: It's hard to compare anything to the kind of restructuring that the dams did to the entire Columbia River system. It turned a flowing river filled with salmon into a series of lakes that warm up in the summer to levels that are almost too warm for salmon to even survive.

Paul Lumley: Fish and Indian people are taken together as our identity.

*Paul Lumley is a citizen of the Yakama Nation and was director of the Columbia River Intertribal Fish Commission from 2009 – 2016.*

Paul Lumley: The creator gave us these gifts, these first foods, salmon, the game, the roots and the berries and said, if you take care of these first foods they will always take care of you. So when we signed the treaties with the United States back in 1855 we made sure that those first foods were protected and there's very clear language in there that says that the tribes have a right to fish at all usual and accustomed place. Well, back in 1855 I'm so glad that our forefathers protected us that way. But we never expected to see the river change the way it has with all these dams. We went from somewhere around 17 to 30 million fish in the Columbia River to just a couple million. When those dams were built we lost tribal villages. So the sacrifices we made for the development of the hydropower system are huge.

Dan Serres: The hydroelectric system has done so much damage to salmon survival and salmon runs that we really rely on the lower part of the river and the estuary to provide that key salmon habitat for salmon recovery and continued survival in the Columbia River. In comes the fossil fuel industry and decides to plunk itself down right in the middle of the critical area where we're really trying to turn the tide back and bring salmon back in the wake of all the damage the hydro system did.

Eric de Place: If we were to put on the banks of that river the biggest liquefied natural gas facility in the world and the biggest coal export terminal in North America and the biggest oil-by-rail terminal in North America and a couple of big propane by rail

facilities, the toxic effects of that, the pollution effects on the river would in aggregate over time be profound.

Paul Lumley: Over the last four or five decades, the tribes have made great progress in many areas of the Columbia basin to bring back the salmon. We have a lot of fish coming back compared to even just a decade ago.

Paul Lumley: Generally in Indian Country when we're faced with big decisions, you look towards the next 7 generations. When it comes to proposals like dams, fossil fuel transportation corridors, I would hate to have the 7<sup>th</sup> generation look back and say, oh, I wish they had fought harder. I kind of say that now about those dams that were allowed to be built. What if we fought harder back then? But I don't want them to say that about my generation when it comes to coal and oil transportation through the Columbia River Gorge. I want them to look back and say, thank you for fending these proposals off.

Eric de Place: For the most part Oregon, Washington and British Columbia have been leaders in charting out clean energy economy. Largely as a consequence of that, they don't look or feel like the traditional sacrifice zones as we thought of them. Now if the plans go forward that the coal and oil industries have, we could very much start to look like that. We'll definitely see more oil spills, definitely see more coal dust pollution. But right now there's this astonishing contrast between the way that we think about the region and perceive the region on a daily basis and the thing that the region could be come in the future.

**EMERGENCY SIREN**/TV Announcer: Emergency sirens roar at the Chevron refinery in Richmond while a fire at the refinery sends flames and a plume of thick black smoke into the sky. The alarm means shelter in place.

Andres Soto: August 6, I leave work and I saw this massive black cloud going up in the sky clearly from the refinery.

*Andres Soto is the Richmond, California organizer for Communities for a Better Environment and a founding member of the Richmond Progressive Alliance.*

Andres Soto: I got a text on the phone from a colleague saying, call our members and tell them there's a shelter in place.

Steve Early: A neighbor across the street came out of her house and shouted up at us: "Why are you outside? Don't you know that you should be inside!" "Why should we be inside?" "There's a shelter in place," she said.

*Steve Early is a Richmond resident and author of Refinery Town: Big Oil, Big Money and the Remaking of an American City.*

Steve Early: That's how we learned that, you know, the emergency protocol when you have a huge refinery fire is to go into your house and close all the windows and tape the doors. We took one look over the top of the hill here and saw Mt. Vesuvius erupting, locked up, got in the car and went to Berkeley, which ended up being downwind of it.

Clair Brown: The fire was very scary. You could see this huge black cloud covering the city.

*Clair Brown is an economics professor at the University of California at Berkeley.*

Clair Brown: We couldn't breathe, so I finally said, "We should all go back inside, we should shelter in place." And you could look out the window and just see the dark air pollution everywhere, and smell it of course.

Andres Soto: Around 7:30 they had a press conference. Heather Kulp, the spokesperson for Chevron, gets in front of the cameras and says, "This is a result of the environmentalists' and the community's not allowing us to modernize our refinery.

Clair Brown: You know, Chevron definitely tried to blame the community's reaction to not, their not making the upgrades that they had been requesting on the reason that this pipe corroded.

Andres Soto: The U.S. Chemical Safety Board did a thorough investigation and identified that it was management neglect, overriding both their engineers and their workers advice to replace a pipe in 1974, that was carbon steel, which has no resistance to sulfur in the oil. The Chemical Safety Board found that it had corroded down to being thinner than a dime. This is what ruptured and the workers, as the incident was going down, said, let's stop the operation, and management overrode them, said, "No, full speed ahead while you fix the problem." That's what led to the leakage that ignited and created that cloud.

Steve Early: There was a history of earlier incidents involving similar patterns of deferred and deficient maintenance. You know, Chevron, it appears, has long gotten away with whatever it can get away with.

Andres Soto: Prior to the 20<sup>th</sup> century Richmond was really an agricultural community and pretty much stayed that way until the railroads came and the oil refinery came.

Steve Early: Between the refinery and the railroad the early development was focused on heavy industry, manufacturing of all kinds. You know, 100 years ago there was certainly little or no consciousness of any responsibility to make any effort to keep the air or the water clean. Chemical manufacturers and other industrial firms shut down and left sites with contaminated soil and all kinds of EPA Superfund-type problems for the people of the city to deal with.

Tom Butts: Richmond is the poorest community in the entire San Francisco Bay Area.

*Tom Butts is the mayor of Richmond, CA.*

Tom Butts: I think part of the reason for that is the fact that we've had a refinery here for over a hundred years.

Andres Soto: The people with money and education don't want to live near a dirty industrial facility. So that means there's really no investment to upgrade housing stock and improve quality of life issues.

Tom Butts: On one hand I think you could arguably say that having a refinery here holds Richmond back and affects our ability to function as a city. On the other hand, it's the source of a huge amount of revenue.

Clair Brown: Chevron is one of the biggest contributors to the budget of the city of Richmond. And even though we think they should contribute a great deal more, given the health and safety problems they cause, without Chevron, Richmond would have a very hard time providing its city services.

Steve Early: Throughout much of the 20<sup>th</sup> century Chevron was always very involved in Richmond politics. Chevron employees, managers would be part of city boards, served as mayors and city council members.

Andres Soto: Chevron was very successful in getting their candidates elected. So we had to start taking on those candidates by running people ourselves. Rather than standing around criticizing and pointing fingers and trying to influence people, the Richmond Progressive Alliance said, "No, we've got to get rid of people and put our people into place."

Steve Early: The Richmond Progressive Alliance first fielded candidates for city council in 2004. Gail McLoughlin, relative newcomer from Chicago was one candidate and Andres Soto was another. Gail won, Andres lost. After serving successfully for two years on the city council, Gail ran for mayor in 2006, surprised everybody by winning and one of the things she did was use the job of mayor, traditionally a part time position as a fulltime organizer role to support a network of non-governmental organizations that were contributing in various ways to the transformation of the city.

Clair: Chevron wasn't happy with the city council. They felt the city was demanding too much money and they felt the city wanted to regulate them more about emissions and health problems. So Chevron decided they would buy different city council members in an election.

Tom Butts: Chevron picked a slate. They put three million dollars behind their slate.

Clair Brown: It actually motivated a lot of us to get much more involved in the election than we might have otherwise. And fortunately voters got extremely outraged. It's like, okay, Chevron's spending how much money for this election?

Tom Butts: Chevron bought all the billboards in Richmond. They were sending out mailers almost daily. They had bought all kinds of media. They were on television, they were on radio. I think people just got tired of it. At the end of the day when the dust settled, none of their candidates won.

Clair Brown: We've come a long way in our awareness about climate change and greenhouse gas and air pollution and we've also realized that we have to make Chevron accountable and that we can regulate them.

Tom Butts: There are clearly people here I think, if they had the power they would shut the refinery off tomorrow and rejoice. What I've looked for is trying to do what we can to make Chevron as safe as possible, to try to minimize any adverse health impacts that come from Chevron. To try to get as much money as we can from them to provide programs and services to our residents and over the long term, hope that the climate change policies that we're adapting in Richmond, that the state of California is adopting, eventually will phase this out.

Clair Brown: I think what Richmond really needs to do is plan ahead to shutting down Chevron because we won't be processing gasoline. We have to keep fossil fuels in the ground, we have to transition. So if you want to become an energy center, go renewable.

*It's hard to imagine the coastal communities of Oregon, Washington and British Columbia turning into fossil fuel centers like Richmond, California. So it surprised folks in these remote areas, once centers for fishing and logging, to hear that the ports in their towns were striking deals to build liquid natural gas export facilities.*

Cheryl Johnson: In 2004 I heard that there was this plan to build an LNG terminal,

*Cheryl Johnson was co-chair of Columbia Pacific Common Sense, a local grassroots group opposing Liquid Natural Gas in Clatsop County.*

Cheryl Johnson: and in order to build that terminal they were going to have to dredge the Columbia River. They were going to have to build a huge pipeline that would go through Clatsop County and through the state of Oregon.

Dan Serres: There was a company called Northern Star, mostly a group from Texas that came in and proposed a very large liquefied natural gas import terminal about 25 miles up from Astoria in the Columbia River, in an area of the Columbia River that's not industrialized.

*Dan Serres, with Columbia Riverkeeper*

Dan Serres: And it's in that really critical place where salmon are acclimating between fresh water and salt water.

Cheryl Johnson: Friends of mine who live in Astoria came to a meeting in December of 04 with the Port of Astoria and found out that they were in the process of signing a lease to build this terminal and there were no public hearings and they were deeply alarmed. So they began to investigate and find out what it was about and to educate the community and then it was 2005 and there was a terminal proposed at Bradwood Landing. Bradwood Landing was very close to my home and I thought, "Oop, I need to get involved in this."

Dan Serres: The liquefied natural gas import proposal at Bradwood was going to LNG from overseas producers. The idea of becoming dependent on another foreign fossil fuel was drawing in a lot of opposition from kind of unusual cross-sections of Oregon.

Cheryl Johnson: We organized three little workshops in our community to let people know what was happening.

Laurie Caplan: I don't think I even knew how dangerous LNG was at that point.

*Laurie Caplan was the other co-chair of Columbia Pacific Common Sense.*

Laurie Caplan: But the disruption to the river and to the shipping, that's what just threw me. And I didn't get why anyone would want to industrialize the Columbia River in the estuary.

Cheryl Johnson: Little grassroots organizations were popping up on both the Washington *and* the Oregon side, organizing to begin to figure out how to fight this huge corporation.

Dan Serres: The backbone of that campaign was really tribal fishermen, commercial fishermen, sports fishermen in the Columbia River and then very rural conservative landowners who had farms along the pipeline route and banded together in this coalition.

Laurie Caplan: I think they thought they could fool us, cause it looks like we would be this town that was desperate and stupid. And what they found was that's not so.

Cheryl Johnson: What we figured out very soon is that there was no way in the world that we could do this by ourselves. So we began to start looking for an environmental group in the Pacific Northwest that would work with us. Columbia Riverkeeper was the only environmental organization who said, yes.

Laurie Caplan: Columbia Riverkeeper came on board. They provided some organizing expertise for us and a structure.

Cheryl Johnson: And so this very beautiful, very powerful alliance came together with all of these little grassroots organizations on both the Oregon and the Washington side and Columbia Riverkeeper, who had staff to help us organize and most of all had very brilliant, very dedicated lawyers, who would help us make it through the mazes of all of the state permitting and all of the times that we had to go to court.

Laurie Caplan: We would fill and overfill any public hearing that was held and generally the only people supporting the proposals would be union people from Portland and other places who had been paid. They were on work hours to come to these hearings and testify for the projects and maybe one or two local people who usually never addressed the substance but just said, we need jobs.

Cheryl Johnson: Clatsop County commissioners voted yes to permit the pipeline through Clatsop County. The boys from out of town basically came in their suits and

promised them the sun and the moon and the stars and they ate it up because it looked like fast and easy money.

Laurie Caplan: They all had binders prepared by the staff, three and four and five inches thick, plus all this other stuff to look at and it was really clear they hadn't read any of it.

Dan Serres: As early as 2007 I was talking to some of these rural landowners that were very knowledgeable about the oil and gas industry and they were saying, this is an LNG export project. All of these LNG terminals are going to be for export. Gas costs three or four times overseas what it costs here. You wait. It's a bait and switch, they're going to flip. Since about 2009 we've known that these were LNG export terminals. In about 2011 they finally admitted it.

Cheryl Johnson: The people of Clatsop County, that is not what they wanted. And so then we thought, what can we do? How can we turn this around? And we ran a recall on the chairman of Clatsop County and lo and behold, when the vote came out, we were successful, we had recalled him. In November of 2010, three of the five Clatsop County Commissioners were up for election and so we worked very, very hard to find people in our community who were willing to run and we were hoping to replace one, possibly two of the county commissioners and we successfully replaced all three of them.

Dan Serres: In 2011, the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality decided that the Bradwood Project would have a negative impact on salmon habitat in a very, very important salmon rearing area of the Columbia River estuary and so they denied the Clean Water Act certification for the project. At the same time certain areas of the county required a vote to change the law to allow pipelines to go through parks. It became this countywide referendum on LNG and over two thirds of the voters in Clatsop voted adamantly to turn this project down. Right around the same time they were getting a "no" from the community and a "no" from the state, the market was also evaporating and so their investors decided that they couldn't make a go of it, and they pulled the plug.

Cheryl Johnson: In 2012 the remaining two positions came open and one of those commissioners had been the only one who decided to vote no, so we re-elected him and then one new on, and then in October of 2013 the Clatsop County Commissioners voted 5 - 0 to deny the pipeline for Oregon LNG through Clatsop County.

*On April 15, 2016, KMUN Coast Radio host Carol Newman interrupted the interview she was conducting to make this announcement.*

Carol Newman: I just got a note and it says—I'm going to cry, I swear I'm going to cry. 12 years of our lives—it says, "Oregon LNG withdraws Warrenton Project." It is over folks, it is over! So we're listening to some music about Highway 101. Yes, it's going to be our highway again. It's our community and we've taken it back!

Laurie Caplan: It took eleven and a half years but it has triumphed and it was only because hundreds and hundreds of people got so angry.

*You're listening to Sacrifice Zones, about the pressures to turn the Pacific Northwest into a fossil fuel export hub. In the second half of the program, the fossil fuel industry makes its first move on a major population center in the Northwest.*

Abbi Russell: There has been some interest in having a facility to move crude oil from the midcontinent oil fields to the West Coast refineries.

*Abbi Russell is the communications manager for the Port of Vancouver, USA, across the Columbia River from Portland.*

Abbie Russell: Late in 2012 we put out a request for statements of interest from companies that might be interested in bringing a trans load facility here to the Port. We received about four or five responses to that request and of those responses, Tesoro-Savage joint venture stood out.

Jared Larrabee: One of the great things about this area is it's the closest deep water port to the midcontinent of the United States and in particular the Bakken Oil Fields.

*Jared Larrabee is the general manager for Vancouver Energy, a joint venture of Tesoro Oil and Savage Companies.*

Jared Larrabee: So it's really the fastest way and the cheapest way and the most economical way and the safest way to get crude oil on rail to a vessel and then delivered by a vessel to those West Coast refineries.

Dan Serres: The Port of Vancouver's very large and ships huge volumes of wheat and other commodities.

*Dan Serres with Columbia Riverkeeper*

Dan Serres: The idea of it becoming the largest oil terminal in North America doesn't seem to be a fit for that part of the Columbia River.

Abbie Russell: We don't judge the commodities that we move. We look at is there a market for this, can it be done safely, does it fit with our values. We're going to move a commodity if it can be done safely, if it can be done in an environmentally responsible manner. And that reflects on whether you're moving wind energy or crude oil.

Jared Larrabee: The Port has been that industrial driver of economic growth of industry here in the region. There's no residential areas close by here. It's all heavy industry out here in the Port, in the Port district. So this fits right in with what the Port was designed to do.

Linda Garcia: We live a half a mile from the proposed terminal site.

*Linda Garcia is a resident of the Fruit Valley neighborhood, which borders on the Port of Vancouver, and a Board officer for the Fruit Valley Neighborhood Association.*

Linda Garcia: We have always had a very positive relationship with the Port of Vancouver. When tenants come in we meet them at our meetings, we get to know what they're going to bring into the neighborhood. We asked Tesoro and Savage and BNSF to come in and speak to us about everything and be open to neighbor concerns. We set up two meeting times for them to come in. They came to the first meeting and did not show up for the second meeting because they were asked hard-hitting questions at the first meeting.

Abbie Russell: The board actually approved the lease in July of 2013.

*Abbi Russell with Port of Vancouver, USA.*

Abbie Russell: And after that we had additional public comment at several meetings at the public's request.

*One of the first groups to oppose the oil terminal was Local 4 of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union. Jared Smith is their current president.*

Jared Smith: Well, our first concerns were an oil spill on the river, the amount of volume that would be going through this pipe to load an oil tanker. One spill would shut down the river. And the second concern was it's taking up land that we've always traditionally used for windmill tower storage and that's like probably the most labor intensive work that we do at the Port of Vancouver and it provides a ton of jobs. And if you're going to put an oil terminal where we store windmill projects, is windmill projects going to lose out to oil?

Jared Larrabee: In North America we've increased our production of crude oil by over 3 million barrels a day. At the same time that that's happened, the North Slope crude production has dropped significantly and we've been filling that gap in the meantime with foreign imports. And this really allows us to bring that production that we do have in North America to the West Coast.

Jared Smith: Oil is not going to be here in the next fifty years like it is now. Windmills are. So we have something that is creating a lot of jobs for us now and has the potential to create a lot of jobs in the future. Tesoro and the Port is not looking into the future all that much. They're looking at what's going to benefit them right now and it's further creating dependence upon something that we don't need.

Abbie Russell: While the board was considering public comment and concerns and whether to approve a lease like this, we had a tragic incident up in Lac Megantic in Quebec.

TV Announcer: The massive inferno sent flames into the night sky, fueled by crude oil from ruptured tank cars. The runaway, unmanned 73 car train derailed about 1 AM sparking a fire and explosions that shattered the quiet of this lake town Lac Megantic, 135 miles north of the Maine border.

Abbie Russell: That was the first time that anybody had really given a lot of thought to the movement of crude oil and it had been moving by train for decades along with other products like diesel and jet fuel and fertilizer that are just as potentially dangerous.

Dan Serres: One Port of Vancouver commissioner said, "You know, well, oil doesn't explode. Well, then it very spectacularly and tragically exploded in the middle of this little Canadian town and killed all these people. And despite that, they rushed ahead and made a decision to enter into this lease agreement.

Abbie Russell: No one can insure that accidents will never happen, that that's unfortunately, it's just a reality of the time that we live in and moving any commodity that has the potential to endanger our—our neighbors, there, we're going to be watching that very carefully. We're going to do everything that we can to make sure it can be moved safely.

Linda Garcia: All we've ever asked is to be transparent and upfront with us. Just tell us upfront what the expectations are. Be realistic and honest with us about the things that could potentially happen and tell us how you're going to address that.

Abbie Russell: We did have folks that were coming expressing concerns and many of them are the same concerns that we have, that it can be done safely, that it can be done in an environmentally sensitive manner. As with all of the projects here at the Port of Vancouver, we want to make sure that those things are met. We live in this community too, we care a great deal about it and we can't do business here without having a safe and environmentally sound record and environmentally sound projects.

Dan Serres: Initially the Tesoro project would be bringing in crude oil from the Bakken region of North Dakota, which is very volatile, has high levels of dissolved gases like propane, ethane, butane and other volatile organic compounds that make it both dangerous in terms of its flammability and explosivity but also dangerous in terms of the toxic fumes that are released if it spills.

Jarred Larrabee: We're designing a world class facility with state of the art techniques and engineering built into the facility and our programs are designed first with prevention, as the first and foremost tactic, mitigation next and then response as the final tactic.

Jarred Smith: Every job we do at the Port, there's going to be workers in the blast zone.

*Jared Smith, International Longshore and Warehouse Union.*

Jared Smith: We also would be doing work inside of the loop track where this terminal's proposed. And there's one way in and there's one way out and if there was any kind of an explosion, there's no way anybody's getting in or out of there.

Jared Larrabee: We've actually offered training, as we know the railroads have, to first responders here locally. The offer is still open and we hope that at some point in time they'll be able to take advantage of that training that we are offering.

Jared Smith: Myself and another member went and met with the local firefighters in Vancouver. They say they can't put it out. All they can do is cordon off an area, you know, a half-mile away or more and prevent people from going out. Because they definitely aren't going to go in.

Eric de Place: So many people who don't agree about much come together in their shared hatred for that project.

*Eric de Place with Sightline Institute*

Eric de Place: And so you have folks like Don and Alona Steinke who are organic farmers nearby who have really led the opposition to it as well as a Republican real estate developer who also can't stand that project because it messes up his plans to build a walkable community that opens up the waterfront there. You've got business owners downtown who don't like it, you've got classic environmentalists who envision a better future. They do sort of share this belief that we don't want to become an oil center.

Nancy Schultz testifying at Vancouver Port Commission hearing: I want to dispel a couple of misstatements that were made this morning during the Tesoro Savage presentation. There have not been a couple of accidents involving oil by rail. There have been seven major accidents across the United States, across Canada, since 2013. One of them in Heimdal, ND resulted in multiple fireball explosions. It is not hyperbole to say that these are rolling bombs. The other lie that they told us this morning is that they operate with transparency. Were they operating with transparency when they signed the contract without public comment and public input? No, they were not.

Abbie Russell: We've taken a lot of public comment over the last three years or so and it's been enlightening. We've incorporated a lot of that into what we're looking at to help ensure that this terminal can be operated as safely and in environmentally responsible manner as possible.

Jared Larrabee: There have been a number of scientific polls that have been done. All of those for the most part have shown that there is more support than opposition for projects like this. It doesn't mean that that support is as vocal as the opponents but there is broad general support. In fact the latest poll that we've seen, one done by the Port, shows that just in the Port district that at worst it's a divided issue.

Daria Ruggles testifying at Vancouver Port Commission hearing: Look how many people turn out and keep turning out. It isn't easy or convenient to keep showing up with the same message of no oil terminal, time after time. What we decide here is vital to us locally but also has global impact. What do we align ourselves with? A clean, healthy, sustainable city for the future where we decide, or will we be victims of outside corporate interests whose methods are informed by unconscionable greed, blatant disregard for scientific facts, a profound lack of respect for life and absence of decency.

Jared Smith: I've never seen this many groups against a project. To have the Longshore Union, to have the steelheaders, the Tribes, environmental groups, business owners, all these nurses and doctors and psychologists.

Abbie Russell: We listen to every piece of feedback that we receive and certainly our board of commissioners, our elected board is listening as well.

Jared Smith: There's over 13 neighborhood associations that don't want this. There's over 100 local businesses. There doesn't seem to be anybody that wants this except for the people that are going to profit off of it: the people taking it out of the ground, the people moving it, the people shipping it. Nobody else wants it.

Michael Wolf testifying at Vancouver Port Commission hearing: Thank you for the opportunity to voice my support of the Vancouver Energy project and extension of the lease. My name is Michael Wolf. I'm senior vice president of Asean Energy Services. We work at all the Tesoro Sites, refineries in California and Washington. Why I support this project? West Coast needs a low cost secure source of oil supply. The West Coast is virtually cut off from the rest of the country and the rest of domestic supply without rail.

Eric de Place: The Port kind of operates in the shadows, nobody really pays attention to it. Port commissioners are typically down ballot races. Without really any public oversight at all they signed this lease for this enormous oil terminal. By contrast, the city council of Vancouver, when they actually looked at the proposal, listened to their citizens, they were unanimously opposed to it. And so, what's happening in Vancouver and what's happening now in other places is that the fossil fuel infrastructure fight is spilling over into local politics.

Jared Smith: The community spoke pretty loud when they elected a new Port commissioner Eric LaBrant who was running basically, you know, opposing the oil terminal and then they had another candidate who was in favor of it. Eric won by a lot.

*Even with Eric LeBrant on the Vancouver Port Commission, he was still out voted two to one, and every time the commission has had an opportunity to terminate their lease agreement with Tesoro-Savage, they have voted instead to extend the lease.*

Linda Garcia: I can't wrap my mind around the idea that I could be sitting in my living room right here, right now with you talking to me, and if that terminal were here and anything happened . . . we could be gone in a heart beat. That's what it feels like they're telling us every single time I go to speak or I testify before them, that it's okay, it's a small risk.

TV Announcer: It has been six hours now since an oil train derailed in the Columbia River Gorge but just in the last hour the fire has intensified and so has the thick black smoke that's billowing from those flaming tanker cars.

Dan Serres: At 12:20 on Friday afternoon on June 3, I was sitting in a public hearing about developing rules for how the railroads have to report and prepare for derailments and oil spills into the Columbia River. My phone started buzzing and I was getting text messages from Columbia Riverkeeper staff, who were saying that an oil train had derailed in Mosier and was on fire and my stomach just sank. I sort of looked around the room and I just sort of got up and said, I don't know if you know this but an oil train's derailed and is on fire in Mosier. I kind of have to go.

Arlene Burns: I was actually in Ashfield, NC and I got a text while driving. There's a fire, an oil train derailed.

*Arlene Burns is the mayor of Mosier, OR, a small town in the Columbia River Gorge, about 65 miles east of Portland.*

Arlene Burns: I was on the phone with various people. I started getting calls from people saying, what's going on?

Paul Lumley: I closed my eyes and I was thinking, oh my God, this is happening now.

*Paul Lumley, Columbia River Intertribal Fish Commission*

Paul Lumley: We had people out there fishing. I just thought, this is the end.

Dan Serres: Brett VandenHeuvel is our executive director for Columbia Riverkeeper. You know, as soon as he got news of this, he and Liz Terhaar went up to Mosier to take a look at this.

Brett VandenHeuvel: I—I just heard that it happened so I drove over there and the emergency response wasn't there yet. My co-worker and I, Liz, got off the exit and looked and saw the burning oil train. On that ramp I felt for the very first time, the deep fear associated with the hazard of oil trains. And I didn't stop. I wanted to take some pictures for the website, I wanted to do this, and I—I got right back on the highway and headed east because it was not safe.

Arlene Burns: The first thing happening was getting people away from the potential blast zone. The school was evacuated in about 17 minutes. The subdivision that's nearest to the incident site was evacuated and then the rest of town very quickly was put on level 2 evacuation which was pack up your car and be ready to hit the road.

Dan Serres: It was really scary for several hours, where the fire seemed to be growing. It didn't seem like there was a whole lot the first responders could do other than get people away from it.

Arlene Burns: When the train derailed it knocked out a manhole—yanked it out of the ground basically and in some wild strange blessing, most of the oil that spilled went through this manhole and into our sewage treatment plant, like a big swimming pool. So it wasn't great news for our sewage treatment plant but it contained the oil in about the greatest place that you could contain oil possible. The biggest luck was that it was not a windy day.

Dan Serres: It's a windsurfing capital of the world. People come there from all over the world to experience the wind that's constantly blowing in the Columbia River Gorge. The idea of this happening on a relatively calm day is pretty remarkable.

Arlene Burns: The air was almost still so this big plume of nasty black smoke was going pretty much vertical. It did cause some wildfire that was close to the tracks that our local fire department was able to keep contained.

Dan Serres: If this had happened one day before when we had a 30 mile an hour wind blowing straight into Mosier off the river, we would have lost the whole town and we would have lost a good chunk of the Gorge around it.

Arlene Burns: All of the communities along these tracks, they know it could have been them.

Dan Serres: That train was bound for Portland, Vancouver and ultimately Tacoma, Washington. So that train was going to be passing through the Portland metro area during afternoon rush hour on a Friday, so it could have derailed anywhere.

Arlene Burns: This wasn't an accident. It was predictable that this was going to happen. It was just a matter of when and where and for us it's very strange that they picked us. Our motto of our town is "small enough to make a difference" and I think we're going to have to live up to that motto and be a microphone for this issue on a larger scale.

[Rally in Hood River, OR, June 4, 2016] Eric LaBrant: Good afternoon. My name is Eric LaBrant. I'm a commissioner at the Port of Vancouver. A lot of us here are angry today, and I'm one of them. I'm angry because this isn't our river to damage or endanger. Our entire region depends on this river for food, water, jobs, recreation and just plain something nice to look at. No one has the right to spoil it, no one. We demand a rapid response and a complete and thorough clean up, long before the train tips over, long before the fires start. We need our legislators to give this issue an actual hard serious look that it requires. Or these disasters are going to continue to happen again and again. It's time for us to stand up and say, this is our river!

Chanting: Hey, hey, ho, ho, oil trains have got to go . . .

Dan Serres: Less than 24 hours after the derailment, we probably had 150 or so people marching through Hood River.

Chanting: oil trains have got to go . . .

Paul Lumley: I work for four tribes – Yakama, Umatilla, Warm Springs and Nez Perce. We have fishing rights right out here. We have treaties with the United States to protect our fishing rights. Yet, these trains could upend all of that. If we stick together we can stop these proposals. We can stop these fossil fuel trains. We can stick together. We can do it. Let's say no to oil trains!

Cheers – "No more oil"

Dan Serres: Everyone is saying the same thing and asking the question of themselves now: What can I do so that no other community experiences this? At the very least people will be protesting any future oil train shipments and I would not be surprised if

it went beyond that to people trying to find creative ways to stop these oil shipments from happening.

Chants: Oil, don't need it, keep it in the ground, it's time to get rid of it. Oil, don't need it, keep it in the ground, it's time to get rid of it."

Train whistle and bell

Vancouver police: This is the Vancouver police. You are trespassing on BNSF railway property. If you refuse to leave, you'll be arrested for criminal trespass in the second degree.

Loud train whistle

Protesters: Coal, oil, gas,  
                  none of these shall pass  
                  Keep it in the ground,  
                  turn the trains around

Dan Serres: What happened wasn't an accident. It was a statistically foreseeable event that will happen again and will happen much more frequently if the Vancouver project goes forward. Any reasonable decision maker at this point would not approve a project like this.

*In September 2014 the fossil fuel fight came to Portland, when the Calgary-based Pembina Pipeline Company, made a deal with the Port of Portland to build a propane export terminal at the Port.*

Jasmine Zimmer-Stucky: With Pembina, Portland joined a list of almost every port on the Columbia in considering a fossil fuel project.

*Jasmine Zimmer-Stucky is a senior organizer with Columbia River Keeper.*

Jasmine Zimmer-Stucky: Portlanders have played a role in helping these other communities and when Pembina came along, it was a wake up call that Portlanders' role was not just to help other communities. It was to organize themselves.

Dan Serres: The first thing that got people's attention was the potential for something to blow up, to catch fire. And then the more people dug into it, the more they realized that this was just a gargantuan carbon project. That's what mobilized thousands of activists to start packing city council hearings and going directly to the decision makers and demanding that they not turn Portland into a huge fossil fuel hub.

Mayor Charlie Hales: Our mail was running a thousand to one against the Pembina proposal.

*Charlie Hales was mayor of Portland from 2012 – 2016.*

Mayor Charlie Hales: I'm not sure if we could get a thousand to one agreement on which cardinal direction the sun rises each morning.

Dan Serres: They were very, very close to getting all the approvals they needed, and really the entire issue hinged on a small connecting pipeline that would have connected the tanks to the ships. That needed to go through an environmental zone.

Jasmine Zimmer-Stucky: Because piping propane through the environmental conservation zone along the Columbia River was prohibited, Pembina actually needed an amendment from the city council in order to make their project work.

Dan Serres: They got through the Planning and Sustainability Commission. By the time it got to city council the worm had turned thanks to enormous public pressure. Portland has a climate action plan that Mayor Hales was very proud of and had gone to the Vatican to talk with people about what Portland was doing. In the meantime back in Portland, people are packing Sustainability Commission hearings and calling on Fossil Fuel Charlie to walk the walk and say no to this big fossil fuel project. And he came back from meeting with the Pope and not that long after announced that he had changed his mind on this project.

Mayor Charlie Hales: The more I looked at it and certainly the more the community looked at it, you know, we all reached the conclusion that this is really contrary to our values.

Dan Serres: If it weren't for that pipe that connected the tanks to the ships and the fact that it crossed through a zone that didn't allow pipes, this whole project might have been built. We may not have Portland's fossil fuel resolution as a result.

*Inspired by the climate activists who stopped the Pembina terminal, Mayor Hales co-sponsored a resolution that uses Portland's zoning and land use authority to ban any future fossil fuel export projects in the city.*

Mayor Charlie Hales: One of the things we did last year was pass the resolution that said, this is city policy, we're not going to export fossil fuels any more from Portland than we do now.

Portland City Council Hearing – Bob Sallinger: My name's Bob Sallinger and I'm here representing the Audubon Society of Portland and our 16,000 members in the Portland metro region. Some people ask what kind of message this sends to the local business community? I say, it sends a clear and important message. It tells the community that Portland is not hitching its economic wagon to the very industries we should be driving toward obsolescence. That we want businesses in Portland that are safe and sustainable. That we are more concerned about the health of our communities than the wealth of distant shareholders. We know that you cannot make fossil fuel transportation safe. We know that you can't make these facilities safe and we know this infrastructure will last for half a century or more. We'd be perpetuating the very industries that we want to drive to obsolescence.

*As the Portland City Council was about to approve the final ordinance banning future bulk fossil fuel storage facilities within the city, the political winds from Washington, D.C. changed course.*

TV Announcer: Right now a historic moment. We can now project the winner of the presidential race. CNN projects Donald Trump wins the presidency. The business tycoon and TV personality . . .

Dan Serres: When I found out that Donald Trump is the president-elect it was really jarring. And the things that I thought about first were not about climate. I thought about the people who are really the most at risk: people of color who watched a president run on openly racist policies and win. These are people who are part of our movement. We have immigrant rights activists who've been leading voices in Vancouver because the neighborhood that would be the most impacted by the oil terminal has a large Latino and immigrant population. And these people are going to be facing a Trump administration that has stated they want to deport any undocumented American. We needed to get as far as we could with as many of these fossil fuel issues as we can, while also putting a lot more effort into reaching out to the other struggles that maybe are facing much worse repercussions at least initially from this.

Mayor Charlie Hales: Thank you all for being here today. We are citizens of a good place and it is so good to see you all. So thank you for being part of the legitimate exercise of democracy and may that always be true in our city and elsewhere. As we all experienced with the Pembina proposal last year, the zoning code actually allows fossil fuel terminals without any limit on the size of these terminals. We, of course, passed a resolution saying we're going in a different direction and today is the proposal to put that into city law, into our code.

Dan Serres: We didn't know if we would be able to get them to amend this policy to make sure it didn't have big loop holes because the version that came originally to the city council had some problems. But they had 300 people in the room. They had these incredibly well spoken high school students.

Tyler Honn: My name is Tyler Honn.

Gaby Lemieux: My name is Gaby Lemieux

Tucker Holstun: Tucker Holstun

Tyler Honn: and we all attend Lincoln High School.

Tucker Holstun: We know that we have to stop building new fossil fuel infrastructure now, if we are to have any hope for remaining within reasonable emission limits and preventing climate chaos. Yet fossil fuel companies continue to operate unchallenged by the government and intend to extract 5 times as much carbon as we can safely utilize. We don't have time to wait around for a few more decades, a few more election cycles. We need to start an aggressive transition to renewable energy now.

Tyler Honn: Change cannot wait until our generation begins to run for public office and to write our own legislation. The change has to start with you. If we don't begin right now by the time we're old enough to hold public office it will already be too late.

Gaby Lemieux: The city of Portland needs to do more than just ban holding tanks over 2 million gallons. We need a full ban on all new storage infrastructure.

Lilly Mason: My name is Lilly Mason

Olympia Magaret: and I'm Olympia Magaret and we are students from Sunnyside Environmental School.

Lily Mason: Last year three of our fellow friends and students came here to testify against any future fossil fuel infrastructure development in the Portland area. The council unanimously approved this resolution and promised to enforce it. But now we feel cheated. With these proposed rules, new infrastructure with under 2 million gallons of fuel would be accepted. This would allow more greenhouse gasses to be emitted into our atmosphere, which is harmful to everyone everywhere and there's no way we can ignore that.

Olympia Magaret: Right now Portland has a chance to prohibit all new fossil fuel terminals and require existing facilities to make seismic safety improvements without expanding.

Lilly & Olympia: Thank you.

Mayor Hales: Thank you. [wild cheering and applause] I told you they'd be a hard act to follow. I cannot imagine a more of a contrast between the disheartening insanity of this week and the hopeful leadership that we see from young people in this community. Let's hear it for our students. [more applause]

Dan: And then Kinder Morgan came up and they were sort of combative for no reason, with a city council that appeared ready to grant them a big compromise.

Ron Mathers: Good Afternoon. I'm Ron Mathers and I feel like we have been invited to a barbeque and we're on the menu. We are opposed to the fossil fuel terminal zoning amendments. My company Kinder Morgan rebuilt a tank in Linnton. We increased the capacity by 30% but that's what it took to justify the investment. We feel that Portland is not an island and that instead of being visionary and exemplary that these land use restrictions and zoning changes are actually shortsighted and very self-centered.

Commissioner Amanda Fritz: So you're saying that the 10% increase isn't going to foster any change.

Ron Mathers: No, that is correct. It's going to not foster change and it's going to lead to disinvestment and it's going to lead to these facilities being stranded. And if that's what your intention is, you will achieve that goal.

Commissioner Fritz: We've put that forward as an incentive. If it's not then I think we should have a discussion about whether we need it or not.

Big whoops and cheer

Mayor Hales: This I believe is the first stone in a green wall along the West Coast of the United States and I spent the last couple of days with my colleagues, the mayors of these other cities, and their citizens want this kind of action too. So we've given them a template for how once again an idea can get started in one community and quickly replicate in another. So I know these are dangerous and scary times, as I said earlier, and we might wonder, is it still true that we will work towards a better day and towards a more just and climate just world. I do believe that that's true. What you have proven is that here in this place we can start something that will change the world. Thank you all very much. [applause]

Jasmine Zimmer-Stucky: Remember as we go into this next four years of a Trump administration, we didn't need Washington, DC to help us. These local fights, these local decision makers, are where we can stop big projects and make big change.

Dan Serres: We're at this really, really critical juncture where we need local and state leaders to do everything they can to stop these projects because we know that Trump and a very fossil fuel-friendly Congress, many of whom deny climate change even exists, will be looking for ways to roll back those authorities.

Paul Lumley: The people that we're working with are very motivated, maybe even more motivated now that we've seen that it really isn't a matter of if there will be an oil disaster. It's happened. We need to get people's attention. If people choose civil disobedience to get the attention, that is just fine by me. That's how change really happens. That's how society changes, when people have had enough.

Anna Fritz – "Turn the Ships Around:"

Coal, oil, gas,  
None of these shall pass  
Leave it in the ground  
Turn the ships around

*Sacrifice Zones was written, narrated and produced by Barbara Bernstein. Original music was composed and performed by Barbara Bernstein, Floating Glass Balls and Anna Fritz. Special thanks to Dan Serres, Eric de Place, Carol Newman, Peter Seigel, Steve Early, KMUN Coast Community Radio, Melissa Marsland, Jerry Mayer, Jan Zuckerman and Bill Bigelow. This program was funded by the Regional Arts and Culture Council and the Puffin Foundation.*

*Sacrifice Zones is available on CD from Feather & Fin Productions, P.O. Box 82777, Portland, Oregon 97282. That's Feather & Fin Productions, P.O. Box 82777, Portland, Oregon 97282. CDs are \$12. You can also purchase them on our website [mediaprojectonline.org/sacrifice-hyphen-zones](http://mediaprojectonline.org/sacrifice-hyphen-zones), where you can learn more about holding the Thin Green Line and the struggle to keep fossil fuels in the ground.*

We are a people awakening  
We are a people reclaiming  
We are a people demanding  
Turn the ships around