

Neal Anderson

Neal Anderson. And contact information is e-mail is sagan2112@yahoo.com. So I think we all remember Tahlequah, the mother orca who cared her dead calf for over two weeks. And as tragic as that was, it did have a silver lining in that it made everyone aware of how much stress our orca population is under. Washingtonians demanded that something be done, and the Legislature answered by passing bills to protect orcas from some of their biggest threats like lost salmon spawning habitat and noise from whale watching vessels. But clearly that wasn't enough. Just today the Center for Whale Research reported that three more orcas were lost, one from each pod. This permit is about wastewater, which is another threat. But it's worth pointing out that this is a company that's already putting orcas at risk by shipping tar sand oil. One of the key threats identified by the government's orca task force was oil spills, and their final report specifically considered a spill of tar sands oil, concluding that a large spill of this type of oil could kill up to half the remaining southern resident orca population. The reason the tar sands would be especially devastating is that it sinks. And once this happens, there's no existing technology that can clean it back up. It would stay on the sea floor, continuing to poison the entire food chain for the salmon and the orcas. I want to come back to the question of reasonableness. Earlier we heard that if something is standard practice by the industry, then it's considered to be reasonable. But business as usual is already killing our orcas. Continuing along this path and continuing to apply that standard means we'll keep reading headlines like the ones we read just today. The only reasonable course of action in this case would be to deny the permit.