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In an effort to support proper oil spill response, there are a few critical areas that can be addressed with regards to managing and preparing for oil spills caused by rail.

A critical point in the effectiveness of oil spill response and clean-up is the time it takes to contain the oil before it spreads and in order to clean it up. Legislation from 2017, ESHB 1136, states that there must be proper demonstration of arriving at the spill site with equipment in 6, 12, 24, and 48 hours depending on the type of spill. When oil spills into inland waterways (spills often caused by rail), even 6 hours can be too late. The oil quickly moves downstream, can hit shorelines, spreads into small modules, and is absorbed into the water column. The longer it takes to respond, the more difficult the spill is to clean-up and the more damage it causes.

We are requesting that the state consider shortening the necessary response times specifically for spills caused by rail to 1-2 hours. We offer a portable containment boom that enables anyone nearby (does not have to be a trained crew), to deploy into the water. Each 82 foot boom is only 50 lbs and is kept in cartridges the size of a large suitcase. Each cartridge with the 82 feet can be connected during deployment extending the boom to unlimited lengths.

For shorelines and across the width of rivers, the boom has been tested and can be deployed in 5-15 minutes either by hand or with a small boat. It can be kept onsite or transported by pick up truck or ATV.

With technology such as this available, the state should consider shortening response time requirements for necessary stakeholders in order ensure less damage. This is a solution to the comprehensive oil spill response preparedness and the state could greatly benefit from demanding quicker containment so that spills have a significantly lesser impact on the environment and neighboring communities.

Additionally, we would ask that you implement a requirement to consider the best available technology for the equipment used in oil spill response for spills caused by rail. We understand that the state is not interested in endorsements or favoring a particular business but we are upfront about informing you that there is a better and faster way to handle oil spills, at least the first response to them. And because of this, the state should consider making necessary revisions in its contingency plan, equipment, and response time requirements.