

Jennifer Calvert

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My name is Jennifer Calvert, and I want to thank you for traveling to my part of the state to gather opinions from eastern Washington residents on your work to update the rule regarding oil spills on and offshore our wonderful state. Washington has a pretty good reputation for caring about the environment and about protecting our resources, and I see this desire to make sure that our rules regarding oil spills are as stringent as possible to prevent the horrible effects that will result when an oil spill happens.

Please notice that I said, "when," and not if. I do realize that businesses that handle the transportation of oil are doing everything they think they can to avoid a spill. Of course, they are. No one wants such a terrible event to occur. I'm sure the chances are very small, but the chance is not zero. I'm a math teacher, and I try to help my students see the implications of the word "probability."

Chance of rain, 30%. Does that mean it won't rain? Should I take my umbrella or not? We need to look at the very dire consequences of allowing tar sands crude oil to be transported through our waters and our local communities such as Spokane. A spill of such oil would be very possibly catastrophic in ways that would take literally years to recover from. Our downtown is very vulnerable due to the railroad running smack dab through it. And our Spokane drinking water could be ruined forever by such a spill affecting our precious aquifer.

You might be gathering that I oppose the idea of transporting tar sands crude oil through my city and my state and the waters off of our shores, and you would be right. Maybe I can't stop that from happening, but you can diminish the possibility and effects of such a calamity by showing that you are acknowledging the unique risks involved and are updating the rule regarding the transportation of tar sands crude oil so that the industry understands that we Washingtonians take this situation very seriously.

We will regulate them more stringently than conventional crude oils and that we demand that they provide plans for oil spill contingency based on the best possible science. We need assurance that the response times and the capability of response resources will be sufficient to respond to the worse case spill. Please insist by means of your rule update that we get the protections from the catastrophic oil spill that Washington deserves. Thank you.