

Don Steinke

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Hello, I am Don Steinke. I'm a retired physics teacher. I represent climate action of Southwest Washington, but we care about [indiscernible], the big river also. Maybe we met before, on June 3 of 2016, Columbia River Keeper and I were at your first hearing in Vancouver regarding oil spill response. Around noon, River Keeper got a call that there was an oil train derailment and spill and fire in Mosier, Oregon. One oil terminal in Clatskanie Oregon now wants to ship heavy crude down the Columbia. Another oil terminal in Portland is already doing that. I believe some of those ships will be going to refineries in the Salish Sea. There are some things that river pilots cannot control such as loss of power, loss of steering, and lack of stern buoys. Three years ago, a large grain ship ran aground in the Columbia near Rainier Oregon and had a large boulder stuck inside a 20-foot gash. They probably needed a stern buoy. My friend who has waterfront property there said it's in my front yard. On March 20, 1984, a Mobil oil tanker was bringing oil up the river from Ferndale, up the Columbia. According to the United Press, the Columbia River Pilots Association reported that the tanker ran aground on the warrior reef after its steering gear broke. And 1000 barrels of oil spilled into the river near midnight. The spill response team said more booms would not have helped. The water was running too fast and the oil was too thin. Regarding thin, the Coast Guard reported seeing the oil 50 miles downstream forming tarballs and headed to the fragile estuaries. Another large ship lost its steering in the lower Columbia about 10 years ago and crashed into the docks at a lumber mill. Five years ago, Captain Scott Ferguson told us that the name of the game is prevention, preparation, and response. To prevent groundings maybe require tug escorts in the river. Stern buoys and steering gear inspections. Now there is another threat. According to Ashley Ahearn, reporting for Earth Fix, the Coast Guard asked Congress in 2011 to adopt stronger regulations to prevent oil spills whilst ships were loading. Three years later, nothing had been done. Consider using those recommendations for guidance. Astronaut Jim Lovell looked back on earth and reflected, people hope that they will go to paradise when they die. They don't realize they were born in paradise. There's no place in the solar system so nice. The tribes near the mouth of the Columbia thought they lived in paradise. So did the tribes in the Salish Sea. In 1850, the Salish Sea may have been the most beautiful place on earth. Now the two most polluted rivers in Puget Sound were and are the home of the Duwamish and the Puyallup tribe. The tribes just finished a three-day march from Puyallup River to your office in Lacey to protest the Tacoma LNG thing. The tribes do a better job at protecting our environment than our own government because our government is corrupted by industry and you guys are stuck in the middle. Use your full authority to protect what is left of paradise. Thank you.