

# Ryan Rittenhouse

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My name is Ryan Rittenhouse. I work for Friends of the Columbia Gorge. Thanks for this opportunity to comment to you and speak with you today. Our number one concern at Friends I know is not the focus of this analysis and update, but it is of course the trains that transport oil by rail through the state of Washington. And we are very concerned primarily with the way in which it is interpreted in the way in which contingency planning is decided based on worst-case scenario and how that is defined and how that is used to set the standards for what the oil train transporters, carriers have to plan for. And it sounds like during the Q&A what was clarified a bit for us was that even though, and as we knew the Washington legislature sets worst-case as the entire trainload, there's some interpretation of that at the agency that incorporates with PHMSA and 24-hour response planning detailing that to be at only about 20% of an oil train. But we know of course that is not worst-case. Worst-case is of course a whole train as we saw with Lac-Megantic and the 24 hour timeframe is very concerning because as we even explored earlier in the day today, these newer sources of oil such as the tar sands have this big mixture of chemicals and other additives that can quickly separate out and create a much more difficult cleanup scenario, which can change dramatically in the first 24 hours. So I hope that the interpretation of the agency moving forward especially with trains and especially because probably most of the increase in oil transport through the state into the future is going to be on trains, we hope you will look at that and hold the transporters to the highest maximum standard possible. Not just in terms of what they have to plan for, but what they have to pay into contingency planning. Aside from that, in general I just want to address the idea of contingency spill response planning in general. And the way in which that normalizes us to the concept of fossil fuel use and fossil fuel spills psychologically. Normalization is a very tricky thing. We tend to think as humans, well, if we can just make a plan, if we can just get some things on paper and believe that we are ready to respond to a disaster, well then that makes us prepared for the disaster, but of course what we've seen when tankers spill, when oil trains derail, is that all of our planning is really mostly for nothing because typically what the first responders have to do in an oil train fire for example is just let it burn. In an oil tanker disaster, the companies have some initial responses required by law, but then as you even said during the Q&A they often then just wash their hands of it and say well we can't clean this up anymore and then it is on the state's burden. And we have seen that with the worst disasters in history. The oil is never cleaned up and the people who are impacted are never properly compensated and of course the natural environment is never resuscitated and is never able to recover, at least not for decades if not centuries, if ever. So, first and foremost we need to recognize that the transport of these commodities, of these newer forms of fossil fuels, such as fracking, oil and tar sands oil is inherently unsafe and the only way to properly plan is to do everything we can to reduce transport of this commodity in general. And finally, I will wrap up just by saying that I'm trying to point out and see this from a different point of view, is that even under business as usual, even with the oil companies doing everything according to plan, they are still spilling into the environment. The entire industry is a plan to deliberate spill in contamination of our ecosystem, even if they never have an unplanned spill, their product is being transported to a facility where it is then refined, where products at the refinery are then dumped into the environment, into the water, into the land, into the air, and then even at the final stage where they are burned in a car or in a power plant those emissions are being dumped into the environment as well. So that's a spill. It's just a plan to spill and we pretend like that's okay because it's planned. Well, it's not okay and especially considering

the fact that we are in the midst of the largest climate strike we have ever seen, which started on Friday with millions of schoolkids all around the world and this whole week we are continuing to see action going on [indiscernible] against climate change. We need to be doing more and agencies like yours need to be doing more to address this deliberate contamination of the environment and the deliberate warming of the planet through industrial emissions and CO2. Thank you.