

Carrie Parks

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Hi, Carrie Parks, Vancouver, I'm sorry. I shouldn't have messed with it, Vancouver resident. Sitting here and listening to all of this I grew up on Puget Sound I boated a lot on the Salish Sea as a kid. Lived next to the Columbia River most of my life off and on. These are precious waterways and I realize how critical it is to keep them unpolluted. Our wildlife depend on them and so does our state economy, which is based largely on agriculture. We are already seeing massive animal extinctions and die offs. We had the sea stars that disappeared a few years ago. We've got the orcas, we've got the salmon. We know that those populations are under stress. So my question is why are we allowing transportation on our waterways at all. Especially of a heavy crude that sinks to the bottom and is difficult to clean up. I wanted to finish by just reading a little bit about the Columbia River bar, which is known as the graveyard of the Pacific. Because of, and it is considered widely to be the most dangerous river bar in the entire world. Why do we want to ship oil across something like that? So I want to read a little bit from a historian that writes for a local website called Offbeat Oregon and this has several stories about shipwrecks out there but he gives a really good description. His name is, he is a historian named Finn Johns. He says, I want to explain what it is that makes the Columbia River bar so deadly. Essentially it is three factors, shallow water, swift current and a steady strong wind that nearly always blows shoreward and toward the north side of the river. The shallowness means that big deep waves that have pulsed all the way across the Pacific Ocean start to get compressed into just a few feet of water, just like they do in surf on the beach. When they do, the current coming out of the river sort of pushes their feet out from under them, creating a sort of a circular swirl with the top moving forward and the bottom moving seaward. I'm going to skip around a little. When winter storms off the Columbia regularly generate hurricane class wind speeds and whip up waves to match, when seas get big and the river flows high and the tide is going out, you get some incredible breakers on the bar breaking all the way across the channel up to 70 feet tall. With a powerful undertow right in front of them. When a boat or a small ship is tackling one of these waves, what can happen is the undertow can grab the boat by the taft rail and pull the stern into the face of the wave while the top of the wave pushes the boat over. What sailors call a pitch pull or end over end flipping. The hydraulic pressure this puts on a boat or a ship is unbelievable especially if the water is shallow enough for one end of the vessel to dig into the sandy bottom as it goes over. Ships have been known to actually break in half. As waves come into the bar on a nice day, they form breakers in the shallows along each side of the channel. As the weather gets heavier the breakers spread further into the middle of the channel, so that less of the water in the bar is left unbroken. Ships, boats and ships alike have to heave to and wait for the weather to settle down again. I think that's probably the gist of it, but I think that description really gives you a picture of why that bar is dangerous and why we have no business shipping oil across it. And I don't think we should be allowing that kind of transportation at all. That's what your rule ought to say. Thank you.