



Oregon
Environmental
Council
It's Your Oregon



Support HB 3225

Please support HB 3225 and join the growing consensus that Oregon must be prepared for incidents related to the dramatic increase in the movement of crude oil through Oregon.

Currently, the State Fire Marshal does not have the authority to coordinate the sort of multi-level, multi-agency response to an oil spill or other similar events. HB 3225 gives the State Fire Marshal that authority and also requires the development of a plan so that Oregon is as prepared as possible in the unfortunate case something goes wrong.

Response plans currently are inadequate. High hazardous trains cross more than a hundred watersheds in Oregon. News outlets broke the story that transport of these materials had been occurring for three months before the state had been informed, let alone been able to develop the sort of plan that HB 3225 requires.

“Trains carrying mass loads of heavy crude oil from Canada’s tar sands have begun moving through the Northwest, creating the potential for an oil spill in parts of Oregon and Washington where environmental agencies have no response plans or equipment in place.

Union Pacific now moves between seven and 10 of these mile-long trains of Canadian crude per month through Northwest states, according to railroad spokesman Aaron Hunt. They can carry more than a million gallons of oil...

The mile-long “unit trains” began in late November, according to the railroad, but spill planners at Oregon’s Department of Environmental Quality and Washington’s Department of Ecology didn’t learn of the new shipments until late January and early February, respectively.”¹

Heavy oil presents new challenges and should require new response plans. Bitumen, or tar sands, is a thick, sticky, tar-like blend of oil, sand, silt and clay. It has to be mined from the earth and is very energy-intensive to extract and refine. Unlike conventional oil, this heavy oil can sink when it hits water. Its viscosity also makes it more challenging and expensive to clean up.


Spill clean-up responders, especially for spills into moving waterways, have limited time to act. It is critical that they have a plan to put the most cost-effective measures together, and fast. Lost time equates into more expensive clean up and more damages to communities and ecosystems.



Please support HB 3225, common-sense policy which has thus far received broad support, so that Oregon can be prepared.

The Enbridge pipeline eruption, pictured here, dumped heavy oil into the Kalamazoo River has cost over \$1 billion in clean-up costs. Mitigation is still ongoing after four years.

¹ <http://www.opb.org/news/article/tar-sands-crude-oil-moves-through-northwest-in-mile-long-trains-asspill-planning-lags/>

Representative
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