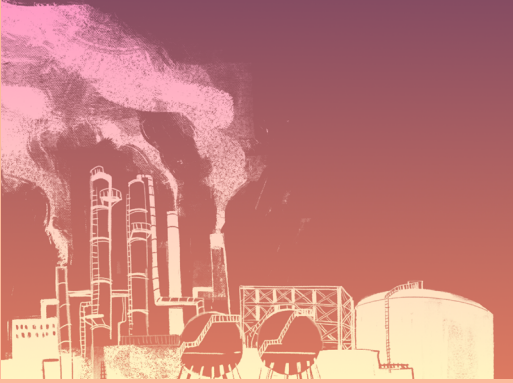


Say No to Fossil Fuels... ...And, Say Yes to a Clean Energy Future



Runged distillation towers spiral into the sky at BP's Cherry Point oil refinery. It stands next to a state-managed aquatic reserve and Puget Sound waters where endangered Southern Resident orca gather to eat endangered Chinook salmon on one side, and by the Lummi Nation reservation and the communities of Ferndale and Birch Bay on the other.

Refineries like this one impact our daily lives and pose real dangers and health impacts. There's the risk of explosions and spillage from volatile material and noxious greenhouse gas emissions, and safety risks posed by the pipelines and rail lines transited by unit trains carrying crude oil through countless communities on their way to Washington's industrial ports.

There are many other fossil fuel plants like BP's Cherry Point refinery in our state. Washington is currently home to five oil refineries along with many other petrochemical and bulk fossil fuel facilities. Pollution and potential for spillage and explosions pose dangerous risks to surrounding communities and waterways.

The fossil fuel industry is ever growing, eyeing our region to expand. In response, communities across the Pacific Northwest have stopped terminals from being built. **Through the leadership of Native Nations and the work of countless people, we stopped seven coal export terminals, eight oil-by-rail terminals, and three fracked gas facilities.** This is something to celebrate and learn from.

Several communities remain vulnerable to the fossil fuel industry because of infrastructure like deep water ports, rail lines and distribution networks.

These communities include the Cherry Point area within Whatcom County, March's Point in Anacortes, the Tideflats in Tacoma, the Ports of Kalama and Longview in Cowlitz County, the Port of Grays Harbor in Hoquiam and Aberdeen, and the Port of Vancouver in the City of Vancouver, Washington. **These communities are beacons of both the risks of fossil fuel infrastructure and the hope for a new clean energy economy.**

The Tools We Have Now

Holding the fossil fuel industry accountable doesn't happen with just one approach. In all these communities, the fight began when fossil fuel companies proposed massive new terminals and/or significant expansions of existing facilities without considering the impact it would have on the communities and health of our region. Projects ranged from the world's largest oil-by-rail oil terminal in Vancouver, Washington, to a proposed coal export terminal at Cherry Point, and the transition of an oil storage and a biofuel facility in Grays Harbor into oil-by-rail facilities. Armed with their unique expertise, Native Nations led these efforts and community members, legal and advocacy organizations, faith leaders, labor unions, health professionals, showed up in the hundreds to public hearings to expose



the risks. Their voices made what is at stake clear: tribal treaty rights and community health.

This revolving door of bad ideas has to be closed. So communities like Whatcom County, Vancouver, and Tacoma focused on fortifying against the next polluting project. They passed temporary moratoriums, but over time these have had the effect of being double-edged swords; at times providing protections, while also diluting a sense of urgency for long lasting solutions. This is why getting the moratoriums right in the first place is so crucial.

Our coalition learned this lesson in Tacoma, where the moratorium left open a loophole that allowed existing industries on the Tideflats — which includes an oil refinery and several fossil fuel facilities — to expand their operations. **Although the City had a moratorium on new facilities, expansions of existing fossil fuel facilities pose the very same risks to the surrounding community.**

Tacoma shows that the details matter. And when strong land use codes are in place they can be an effective industries accountable to protect community health and safety.

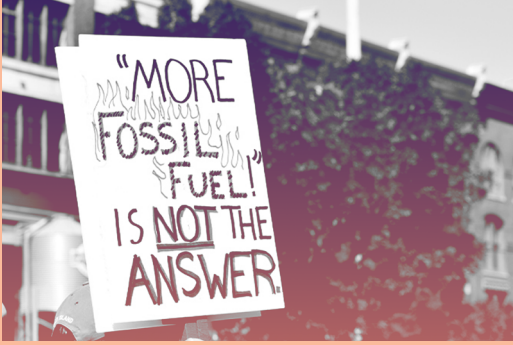
Simultaneously we also need to lay out clear guidelines for the sustainable energy solutions we want to see in our transition to a clean energy world. But these solutions need to be tailored to the needs of each community's infrastructure, industry, and economic development vision.

Developing Durable Solutions

This summer, the long term work of community building and fortification paid off when Whatcom County demonstrated a way forward. After a decade, Whatcom became the first refining community in the country to not only ban new fossil fuel facilities, but also the expansion of existing fossil fuel facilities. They did this by amending the County's land use code to ban new fossil fuel refineries and transshipment facilities, and require rigorous environmental review for upgrades to existing facilities.

Whatcom County isn't alone in these changes. In November, the City of Tacoma — home to one of Washington's refineries — also passed similar permanent land use code updates which place limits on expansions to existing facilities. Clean energy developments are the only exception.

While this code is stronger than what it replaced, the Puyallup Tribe — whose treaty territory includes the Tacoma's port industrial area — and community members have raised concerns about loopholes for some fossil fuel expansions that still remain in their recently amended land use code. Vancouver is also on their way towards establishing codes to ban bulk fossil fuel terminals.



When we update land use codes to ban bulk fossil fuel facilities, local jurisdictions have a chance to clarify the types of economic investments they are seeking on their land. This approach also unburdens the community from engaging in long review processes of dirty and dangerous projects.

The work that Native Nations, communities, and coalitions, have been engaging in at the local level — whether Whatcom, Tacoma, Vancouver or elsewhere — doesn't live in a silo. It might be concentrated locally but is connected to the state level work of passing and actualizing climate laws that will usher us into a future of clean energy.

The Vision We Need for Tomorrow

The legacy of victories against major fossil fuel terminals is at the backbone of the work to fortify against fossil fuel fights. Our work at WEC balances an urgent need to ensure the fossil fuel industry does not deepen its hold on our economy while simultaneously advancing systemic change towards a clean energy economy. This is only possible because of the leadership of Native Nations and the deep collaboration across our coalitions such as *Stand Up To Oil*, *Power Past Coal*, and *Power Past Fracked Gas*.

Defining what kind of clean energy we want in our communities remains an ongoing effort. We have learned time and again in fighting terminals that project details matter, and even some projects that don't emit greenhouse gas emissions can have devastating community impacts.

Our work to stop terminals and fortify communities goes hand in hand with our environmental and community protection laws. This momentum will turn the tide towards a more just and equitable clean energy economy. And it is crucial that those most impacted have a say and a role in what happens across the landscape and in their communities.

This is where statewide policy comes in. With the work of Native Nations, communities and coalitions across the state, the state legislature passed groundbreaking laws like the Clean Fuel Standard and the Climate Commitment Act in 2021 and the Clean Energy Transformation Act in 2019. These laws reflect the turning tide towards a clean energy economy, addressing inequities, and building a robust future.

Ultimately the impact of public policy and economic change is local. This underscores the need to focus and support local action. **It is a critical feedback loop: the learning we are doing within these communities informs the passage of climate laws and action plans at the state level.** In turn state-level policies will impact and protect communities that are consistently targeted by the fossil fuel industry.

We are in a moment of urgency but also opportunity. With community power and lessons from the past in our collective toolbox, we can forge a clean energy future — together.

