



Washington State Legislature

Washington State Legislature
Legislative Building
Olympia, WA 98504

June 23, 2014

The President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President,

We are writing you today out of concern that your Administration is considering lifting the long-held ban on the export of crude oil. While lifting this ban may benefit oil producers, it will be detrimental to the environment, the American people, and the people of Washington state in particular.

On May 6, you released the third U.S. National Climate Assessment, which laid out in no uncertain terms that global climate change is real. It is already adversely affecting our lives, and human activity is the primary cause. If we ever hope to slow or stop global climate change, we must at this point take every available step we can to reduce the release of carbon into our atmosphere.

As we strive to move away from our reliance on fossil fuels, with higher mileage and emission standards, a growing electronic vehicle market, and new innovations at every turn, we should not simply shift that pollution to other parts of the world and enable them to go through the same cycle from which we are just starting to recover. Lifting this ban will result in the burning and release of more carbon into our atmosphere by other countries with weaker emissions and environmental standards. To do so is irresponsible and runs counter to the spirit of the National Climate Assessment.

The oil export ban was put in place in 1975 to keep American crude in America. This was a wise move that protects our energy interests and American consumers. The economic arguments that support lifting the ban are shaky at best. Oil producers, of course, are supportive of lifting the ban, as the ability to ship their product overseas will lead to even higher profits for these already successful companies. However earlier this year, Energy Secretary Moniz asserted that the oil industry had largely failed to make the case that exports would be a net positive for U. S. consumers. According to a report by Barclays Capital this last January, the American people are currently reaping a net benefit of approximately \$9.6 billion per year due to the oil export ban. Moreover, we support a broad energy shift away from fossil fuels and replacing them with renewable energy sources.

If this ban is lifted we expect to see an increase in the amount of crude moved by rail. Oil is now being shipped by rail at rates that were never before imagined. In 2008, 9,500 carloads of crude oil were moved across the United States on rail. By 2013, that number had spiked to 407,642 carloads. Due to this increase of transporting oil by rail, in the last two years the United States has experienced more oil spilled because of train derailments than we witnessed over the previous 40 years. This exponential increase is shocking enough on its own, but in the last year we have also seen, all too starkly, the dangers associated with this mode of transport, with fiery derailments in Lynchburg Virginia, Casselton North Dakota, Aliceville Alabama, and Lac-Mégantic in Quebec.

The growth in oil by rail is largely due to the newly accessible deposits in the Bakken formation underneath North Dakota. The Bakken oil is more dangerous than other heavier crudes. The U.S. Pipeline Hazardous Material Safety Administration has warned that Bakken crude may be more flammable, and the petroleum industry's Bakken Shale blog has admitted it is "flammable like gasoline".

Much of this new oil by rail is coming through Washington state due to our deep-water ports and refinery infrastructure. Currently in Washington and Oregon, eleven refineries and port terminals are being planned, built, or are already operating oil by rail shipments. If all of these refineries were to come online and operate at full capacity, they would require 12 mile-long trains every day, moving 858,800 barrels (over 36 million gallons) through our communities – more than the capacity of the proposed Keystone XL pipeline.

Without the need to refine the oil before loading it into tankers and barges, we would expect to see even more trains every day through our state. Because these shipments fall under the purview of the interstate commerce clause, our ability to regulate and protect our citizens is minimal. This potentially massive increase of oil by rail through Washington state is a safety and environmental disaster waiting to happen.

We respectfully ask that you leave the current export ban in place. It protects our consumers, our environment, and our national interests. Lifting the ban will lead to a measureable loss in our ability to steer our energy future. With more oil by rail traffic there will ultimately be increased oil train accidents and environmental degradation.

Thank you for considering this request.

Most Respectfully,



Rep. Jessyn Farrell
46th Legislative District



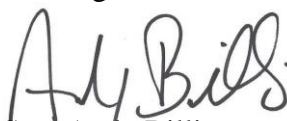
Sen. David Frockt
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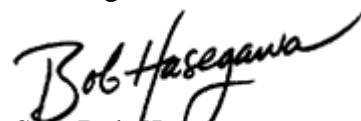
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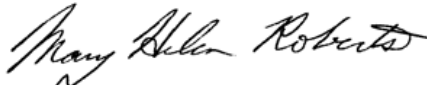
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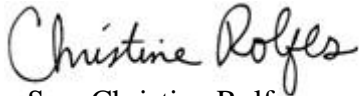
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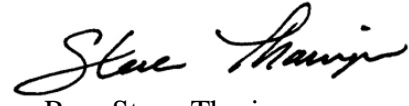
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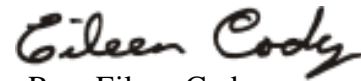
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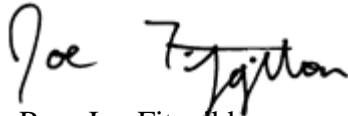
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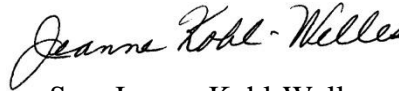
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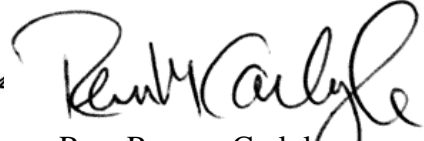
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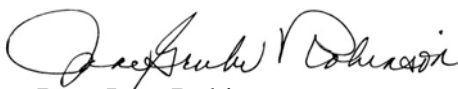
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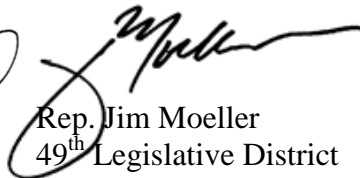
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49th Legislative District

cc: Governor Jay Inslee
Senator Patty Murray
Senator Maria Cantwell