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## **Shell loses appeal of oil train project in Skagit County**

*Skagit County Superior Court agrees that environmental and public health risks of dangerous oil rail project should be assessed*

Mount Vernon, WA – Today, Skagit County Superior Court dismissed Shell Oil Refinery’s appeal of a decision that required an environmental impact statement for their proposed oil-by-rail expansion. This decision follows the Skagit County Hearing Examiner’s February 2015 ruling that Shell’s proposed project posed a significant risk of harm to people, water and wildlife.

“It’s time to stop suing each other and get down to work,” said Jan Hasselman of Earthjustice. “The community deserves an honest conversation about this project and the court has said we are entitled to one.”

The proposed expansion would route six more mile-long oil trains per week through Washington, adding at least one hour a day of more traffic in Skagit County. Increased oil train traffic already puts Puget Sound, Padilla Bay, the Skagit River and communities at risk. More oil spilled from trains in 2014 than in the last four decades combined.

“This is a victory for Skagitonians,” said Tom Glade of Evergreen Islands. “They refused to let this project move forward without a full review of the impacts. And now, we will get one.”

In Skagit County, the oil trains pass right through the downtowns of Burlington and Mount Vernon. The oil trains also cross the old Burlington/Mount Vernon bridge spanning the Skagit River immediately above the Anacortes Water Treatment Plant and the old swing bridge spanning the Swinomish Channel directly adjacent to the Padilla Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve.

This decision comes as Shell faces increasing public resistance to their plan to harbor their Arctic drilling rigs in the Port of Seattle.

“The oil industry needs to realize that Northwesterners value our health and environment more than their expansion plans,” said Rebecca Ponzio of Washington Environmental Council and the Stand Up to Oil Campaign. “We’re not just going to let them risk our health, water, and safety. We are pushing back hard. And I think that’s starting to get through.”

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*RE Sources for Sustainable Communities, Friends of the San Juans, ForestEthics, Washington*

*Environmental Council, Friends of the Earth, and Evergreen Islands filed the Shell appeal, represented by Kristen Boyles and Jan Hasselman of Earthjustice.*