Celebrating 25 years of working together

Sightline Institute 2017 Gratitude Report
Many of you reading these words were there with me. The rest joined over the years. Gradually but unmistakably, Sightline ceased to be a “me” or a “you.” It became an “us.”

A big, broad, diverse, wide-ranging, joyful, angry, hilarious, committed, powerful us—tens of thousands strong now—all applying ourselves to making this place on Earth a global model.

Since the beginning, we have dreamed of what’s possible, and every year, we have realized a few more of our dreams. Our work is far, far from done, of course, but in these pages, let’s pause to reflect, celebrate, and express gratitude for the progress we’ve made during a quarter century of us.

Thank you.
“The Emerald Corridor is remarkably lucky to have a world-class collection of intellectuals at Sightline to question our echo-chamber assumptions, propose innovative solutions, and introduce best practices from around the world. Sightline is thoughtful, provocative, learned, unafraid to take risks, and absolutely never boring.”

Denis Hayes
SEATTLE, WA

“What I love about Sightline is authenticity and reliability. When I need in-depth research on critical issues related to my work and areas of personal concern, I can always rely on Sightline to provide that for me. I am smarter and more effective because of Sightline.”

Wayne Lei
PORTLAND, OR

“Sightline’s 25th Anniversary Milestones

Sowing Seeds

Sometimes change happens in days, other times in years. But a good idea, once planted, is tenacious.


2006: NEW, now with a staff of 10, becomes Sightline Institute. The strategy turns from books to research and communications in support of key reform movements such as carbon pricing and green cities.

2018: Sightline has grown to 18 employees, a $2.3 million budget, and more than 60,000 online followers. We are grateful to our many supporters and proud of our impressive track record and influence.

SIGHTLINE INSTITUTE Much has changed about the organization in 25 years, but the essence remains unchanged: you and thousands of others, all of us committed to Cascadian sustainability.

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SIGHTLINE INSTITUTE
PUTTING A PRICE ON CARBON POLLUTION: If Sightline could do one thing for a sustainable future, we’d put a price on the emissions of climate-changing greenhouse gases.

2008: Partly inspired by Tax Shift, British Columbia announces the world’s most comprehensive carbon tax.


2016-2018: Legislative bills in Oregon, and bills and two citizens’ initiatives in Washington move carbon taxes ever closer to adoption.

THE THIN GREEN LINE: Stopping Coal, Oil, and Gas Expansion in Cascadia

Your support allows us to play the long game, fortifying lasting movements against fossil fuel export projects.

2010: Sightline starts uncovering the hazards of transporting coal, oil, and later fracking gas by rail, pipeline, and tanker through Cascadia. Our analysis feeds a growing grassroots revolt against proposed fossil fuel export projects. We dub the movement the Thin Green Line.

2015: Sightline exposes that Big Coal is not setting aside adequate clean-up funds. A resulting federal investigation deflates coal stocks, which helps to push Peabody and other coal companies into bankruptcy.

2018: By now, Sightline’s work has helped to end almost every proposed fossil fuel export project in Cascadia: six coal, six oil, and seven fracked gas and petrochemical facilities.

“Sightline is the go-to group in the Northwest for solid, fact-based research in support of policy proposals that actually improve the quality of life for Cascadia’s citizens. Especially awesome is the work they have done to backstop the Thin Green Line of opposition to fossil fuel infrastructure proposals across the region.”

Kay Treakle
TACOMA, WA

GREEN CITIES:
A crucial element of sustainability is our immediate living surroundings, something all of us in the Sightline community have reinforced again and again.

1996: Sightline’s short book The Car and the City makes the case that compact, walkable communities are among the most essential strategies for a sustainable Cascadia.

2007: Sightline inspires the creation of WalkScore, an online tool that rates neighborhood walkability. WalkScore has subtly shifted real estate markets toward sustainability across North America and beyond.

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2015-2018: Sightline’s participation in Seattle’s Housing Affordability and Livability Agenda and follow up to it helps to win a raft of reforms for affordability and sustainability in Cascadia’s largest city.

2015-2016: Sightline is the principal policy architect of a groundbreaking Seattle initiative to create the world’s first Democracy Voucher program. The initiative passes in a landslide, Portland then crafts and adopts a similar policy.

2010: Sobered by the growing gridlock and dysfunction of Cascadian governments, Sightline launches a program to promote democracy reforms to reduce the corrupting influence of big money, to substantially increase voter participation, and to give voters more of a voice, through ranked-choice ballots and proportional representation.

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2018: Sightline helps pass automatic voter registration in Washington and supports a referendum for proportional representation in British Columbia, which could speed sustainability progress and establish a better model for democracy on this continent.

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DEMONCRACY REFORM:
Our systems of government must work for everyone in order to effect change, and with your support has made early progress possible.

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I love Sightline because it’s made up of really smart people committed to policies that support people and planet—democracy and the environment—in the Cascadia region.”

June Wilson
SEATTLE, WA
2017 Policy Impacts

Just a glimpse of what your support made possible!

Oil-by-rail terminal rejected in Vancouver, WA: The state permitting body unanimously recommended that Governor Inslee reject the proposal to build North America’s largest oil train facility on the Columbia River (which he did in early 2018).

Democracy Vouchers debut: During the 2017 Seattle municipal elections, more than 15,000 people used their Democracy Vouchers for the first time, increasing nearly five-fold the number of contributors, compared with previous elections for the same offices.

Mandatory Housing Affordability (MHA): Our work analyzing MHA helped secure passage of the downtown/South Lake Union upzones that constitute a big step forward for affordability and housing options in Seattle. In addition, our articles on MHA in lowrise zones helped improve the MHA plan in those areas.

2017 Highlights & Research Findings

Sightline.org averaged over 51,000 unique visitors per month.


“...They were the guys that were there with (the Lummi Nation). They… took the time to understand what’s going on with Indian country. They are intelligent people who know their stuff.”

Darrell Hillaire
BELLINGHAM, WA

Statement of Financial Position
December 31, 2017

ASSETS
Cash and investments $3,347,902
Donations and grants receivable 397,147
Other assets 22,554
Total assets $3,767,603

LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS
Liabilities
Accounts payable and accrued expenses 156,868

Total liabilities 156,868

Net assets
Unrestricted 2,470,480
Temporarily restricted 1,140,437
Total net assets 3,610,917

Total liabilities and net assets $3,767,603

Statement of Activities
For the Year Ended December 31, 2017

REVENUE
Grants $1,605,000
Contributions 644,074
Program fees 3,610,917
Investment revenue 289,575
Total revenue 3,253,586

EXPENSES
Programs 1,908,643
Funding 240,764
Management and general 76,098
Total expenses 2,225,505
Change in net assets 1,028,081
Net assets, beginning of year 2,772,836
Net assets, end of year $3,610,917

Change in Cash and Investments
For the Year Ended December 31, 2017

Net change in cash and investments $636,761

Cash and investments, beginning of year 2,711,141
Cash and investments, end of year $3,347,902
“What I love about Sightline is, first and foremost, its incredibly talented and dedicated staff. They walk their inspirational talk and they make you want to walk with them.”

Mary Fellows
PORTLAND, OR