



Sightline
INSTITUTE

2015 Gratitude Report

Sightline's mission is to make the Northwest a global model of sustainability—strong communities, a green economy, and a healthy environment.

Smart solutions for a sustainable Northwest

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FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

For Sightline, 2015 was consequential: a huge win against money in politics, a breakthrough on urban affordability, knock-out punches against fossil-fuel exporters, and our biggest annual growth in subscriptions ever.

Yet an invisible victory may have been even more gratifying. Sightline's research helped nudge the dirtiest of fossil fuels toward the abyss.

US law requires coal companies to set aside tens of millions of dollars to clean up, or "reclaim," mined-out lands. And Sightline found that some cash-strapped companies had been exploiting legal loopholes to avoid setting aside enough money.

Sightline seeded a series of bombshell stories by Reuters and energy news outlets, highlighting how state and federal regulators were allowing coal companies to foist cleanup risks onto the public. Investors and regulators began taking notice.

The heightened scrutiny on reclamation costs, and the huge dollar figure attached, roiled the coal markets. Tens of millions of dollars in coal company stock values evaporated.

A handful of allies helped in this effort, and of course, the US coal industry was already on the skids. Still, thanks at least in small measure to Sightline, two of North America's largest coal companies, Alpha and Arch, have filed for bankruptcy in recent months, and Peabody Energy, largest private coal miner in the world, is teetering on the brink of insolvency.

You did this. Your support helped make 2015 a consequential year.

Thank you.

Alan Durning, Executive Director
SIGHTLINE INSTITUTE



"Sightline's expertise is invaluable in my work around the issue of coal and oil transport by rail. Eric de Place's research is very credible and extremely helpful for our outreach and advocacy."

Susan Drumheller,
IDAHO CONSERVATION LEAGUE

\$85M Coal Transport Support Dies (WA)

The Washington State House removed a provision in the Senate's transportation bill that would have supported a coal export terminal at the port of Longview. Sightline researchers uncovered the provision in the bill, alerted local activists, and wrote a widely disseminated description of the proposal.

Housing Affordability and Livability Agenda (HALA)

Grand bargain struck to produce and preserve affordable housing. (Sightline helped to shape the public policy discussion.)

Honest Elections Seattle (WA) wins handily with 63% of the vote

(Sightline served as principal policy architect of this pioneering model for campaign finance reform.)

NEW website with improved visual and mobile functions

Sightline staff
made over

45

presentations across
the Northwest

Sightline research quoted or cited over 549 times

Notable media mentions: *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *The Atlantic*, *Vox*, *Yes! Magazine*, *US News*, *Huffington Post*, *Bloomberg Business*, *Grist*, *The Guardian*, *Christian Science Monitor*, *The Oregonian*, *LA Times*, *The Stranger*

"Sightline is a trusted source for analysis and technical research that guides policy directions on complex systemic challenges."

Richard Gelb,
KING COUNTY DEPT OF NATURAL
RESOURCES AND PARKS

Facebook
audience
grew
38%
in 2015

"I try to make visiting Sightline Daily part of my daily work duties. It informs and influences my priorities and gives context for how my city fits into the broader regional context."

Kristin Lynett,
CITY OF TACOMA SUSTAINABILITY OFFICE

Portland Bans Fossil Fuel Infrastructure (OR)

In November, the Portland city council passed a resolution banning new fossil fuel infrastructure within the city and its adjacent waterways. Sightline research heavily informed the grassroots movement that advanced the resolution, and our staff advised on the resolution's structure, meeting with local leaders.

Twitter audience
grew 29% to almost

8,800
followers

Sightline's term
"Thin Green
Line" continues to
pick up steam



How the Northwest Is Winning Against Dirty Energy

At first, it seemed inevitable. Buoyed by spiking commodity prices and new extraction opportunities, the coal, oil, and gas industries came calling on the Pacific Northwest in 2012, aiming to turn the region into a pit stop on the highway to energy markets abroad. They brought with them money, political influence, and a reckless disregard for local communities.

But the Northwest had other ideas. From the beginning, Sightline was a leader among the growing resistance movement, investigating the risks from coal dust, bomb trains, air pollution, water contamination, climate impacts, and even worsened traffic congestion in our cities and towns. In doing so, we rallied one of the most effective grassroots opposition movements in the region's history: firefighters and city councilmembers, community groups and workers, natives and newcomers took a stand together—a “Thin Green Line”—against new coal, oil, and gas schemes.

It's hard to believe how much the Northwest accomplished. Only a few of the original coal export projects remain, and they are buckling under pressure; the dozen-plus oil-by-rail plans are being winnowed almost monthly; and local activists are slamming the brakes on petrochemical plans. How did we get here?

A TSUNAMI OF SCHEMES

Coal came first. As the first rush of proposals arrived—new and expanded terminals all along the coast from Coos Bay, Oregon, to Prince Rupert, British Columbia—Sightline worked shoulder-to-shoulder with a network of advocacy groups fighting back. In a series of reports and analyses, we showed how communities all across the region were facing unprecedented new threats to their economies and environment from large-scale coal shipments.

Then, in 2013, Sightline published the first edition of a groundbreaking account of the emerging **oil-by-rail** industry. Published just weeks before a deadly oil train derailment in Quebec, Sightline's report, “The Northwest's Pipeline on Rails,” demonstrated the scale and breadth of the industry's ambitions. It became the cornerstone of a new region wide opposition campaign to halt oil train development.

We followed our coal exports and oil train work with a new and more comprehensive catalogue of the fossil fuel projects facing Cascadia. In “Northwest Fossil Fuel Exports,” we expanded our research to include Canadian **tar sands** pipelines and **fracked gas** projects along the coast, showing that the Northwest was facing the carbon equivalent of more than five Keystone XL Pipelines' worth of new energy project proposals. Most recently, Sightline began exploring a third wave in the fossil fuel tsunami, the array of **fracked fuel and petrochemical projects** cropping up around the Northwest—methanol, liquefied natural gas, propane-by-rail, and others.

The Thin Green Line

British Columbia
Washington
Oregon

We complemented all of this infrastructure-based investigation with original research scrutinizing coal trade news and coal companies' own financial reports. Our **coal finance** work quickly exposed the industry for the economic house of cards it is, effectively toppling its claims with regional decision makers that coal was a sound investment for Cascadian communities.

WEAVING THE THIN GREEN LINE

In partnership with campaigns like Power Past Coal and Stand Up to Oil, Sightline's research has unleashed a maelstrom of citizen opposition to dirty energy schemes. The Northwest's “Thin Green Line” is setting new records for public participation: more than 215,000 people submitted comments just for the preliminary phase of a single coal export terminal in Longview, Washington, and more than 276,000 weighed in against a massive oil train depot proposed for Vancouver, Washington. In cities like Tacoma, community members have united powerfully against several new projects and quickly become a dynamic new political force.

Sightline's work grounds the movement in airtight data and compelling argument. Policy director Eric de Place has emerged as a leading voice of the opposition, testifying in the widely watched trial of the “Delta 5” and giving talks before thousands of northwesterners. He is quoted hundreds of times a year in the press, including recent placements in *Forbes*, *King 5*, and a feature in *Time Magazine*.

STANDING TALL, MOVING FORWARD

One by one, the Thin Green Line is stopping coal and oil projects in their tracks. Of the six coal export projects originally proposed in Oregon and Washington, only two now remain. Similarly, at least three oil-by-rail projects on the Columbia River and at Grays Harbor have crumbled under pressure. More recently, regulators denied permits to an enormous natural gas export facility on the Oregon Coast.

Yet there's much work still to be done. Coal export projects at Ferndale and Longview, Washington—the two biggest coal terminals in North America if built—will issue their initial environmental reviews this year, ushering in a new opportunity for public comment and participation. Meanwhile, the fate of the continent's largest oil-by-rail facility, planned for Vancouver, Washington, is still far from clear.

Thanks to your support, Sightline will be there every step of the way, cementing our region's reputation as “the place where dirty energy projects go to die.” We will stand ready with the information and arguments that propel and inspire this formidable new movement, Cascadia's Thin Green Line.

Statement of Financial Position

December 31, 2015

ASSETS

Cash and investments	\$ 2,414,188
Accounts receivable	617
Donations and grants receivable	419,684
Other assets	171,632
Total assets	\$ 3,006,121

LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS

Liabilities

Accounts payable and accrued expenses	\$ 141,704
Total liabilities	141,704

Net assets

Unrestricted	2,087,096
Temporarily restricted	777,321
Total net assets	2,864,417
Total liabilities and net assets	\$ 3,006,121

Statement of Activities

For the Year Ended December 31, 2015

REVENUE

Grants	\$ 1,029,310
Contributions	576,216
Publication sales and fees for service	25,047
Investment income	(2,808)
Total revenue	1,627,765

EXPENSES

Programs	1,161,802
Fundraising	244,705
Management and general	66,791
Total expenses	1,473,298
Change in net assets	154,467
Net assets, beginning of year	2,709,950
Net assets, end of year	\$ 2,864,417

Change in Cash and Investments

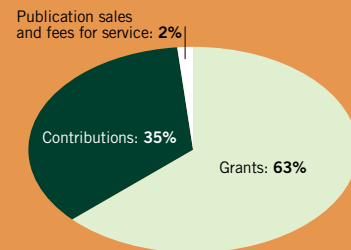
For the Year Ended December 31, 2015

Net change in cash and investments	\$ 180,866
Cash and investments, beginning of year	2,233,322
Cash and investments, end of year	\$ 2,414,188

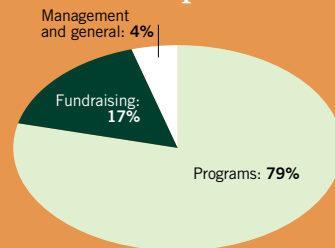
These figures have not yet been audited by an independent accountant. For a copy of the audited financial statements, please contact Migeo Han by calling 888-447-1880 ext. 118.

In accordance with accounting principles, Sightline records income when promised, not when received. In 2015, Sightline received grant commitments that are designated for use over several years. We also hold in our asset accounts bequests intended for use over many years. Because this statement shows this income and these assets but not the corresponding spending plans, it overstates our uncommitted assets.

2015 Revenue



2015 Expenses



Smart solutions for a
sustainable Northwest

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