



Sightline
INSTITUTE

2019

Gratitude Report

2019

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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**Sightline Daily Editor*

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



You made it happen. Your support allowed the Thin Green Line to hold strong again in 2019: not one climate-disrupting fossil-fuel export project on Cascadia's coast advanced appreciably toward completion. Sightline, working with many others, turned the Kalama methanol and Jordan Cove LNG proposals into shambling zombies, not quite dead yet, but definitely not alive. The Fraser Surrey Docks coal export plan died once and for all. King County, Washington, banned new fossil-fuel infrastructure, and Cloud Peak Energy—the coal giant of the Powder River Basin and long a focus of our financial muckraking—declared bankruptcy.

You made it happen for low-carbon cities.

Sightline, working with partners, got Seattle to re-legalize backyard cottages and in-law apartments, passing the most progressive, climate-friendly such law in the United States. Tacoma, Burien, and smaller Cascadian cities followed suit. In Olympia, we helped convince the legislature to adopt two reforms to welcome abundant housing in compact, walkable neighborhoods throughout Washington. Not to be outdone, the Oregon legislature relegalized missing middle housing, such as fourplexes and other forms of “gentle density,” statewide—one of the most consequential climate victories Sightline has ever helped to achieve.

You made it happen for democracy reform, arguably the most essential step to climate action of all. With allies, we finally convinced the Oregon legislature to join Washington and others in passing the National Popular Vote Interstate Compact. Once enough states join, this compact will fix the Electoral College. The Oregon Voting Rights Act also won adoption, with our help. It authorizes local elections to use more equitable voting systems, including proportional representation. Local reforms help lead to state and ultimately federal reforms, where election upgrades can speed climate action.

You made all these things happen with your steadfast support of Sightline, and Sightline is deeply grateful. **Thank you for your trust, your generosity, and your friendship!**

In gratitude,

Alan Durning, Executive Director
SIGHTLINE INSTITUTE

Your support makes our impacts possible

A few highlights from 2019:



HOLDING THE THIN GREEN LINE:

Stopping fossil fuel infrastructure expansion

Cloud Peak Energy, the Powder River Basin coal giant, declared bankruptcy, having gambled and lost on coal exports. For years, Sightline has been feeding our deep research on Cloud Peak's weak finances to the business press, chilling the investment climate, and shaping the media's account of the bankruptcy.



BUILDING WELCOMING, GREEN CITIES:

Carbon- & family-friendly cities for all

Oregon lawmakers passed a groundbreaking middle housing bill (HB 2001), re-legalizing fourplexes in all large cities and duplexes almost everywhere in the state. Sightline worked hard behind the scenes on policy wins for more homes of all shapes and sizes, and ultimately, for our climate.



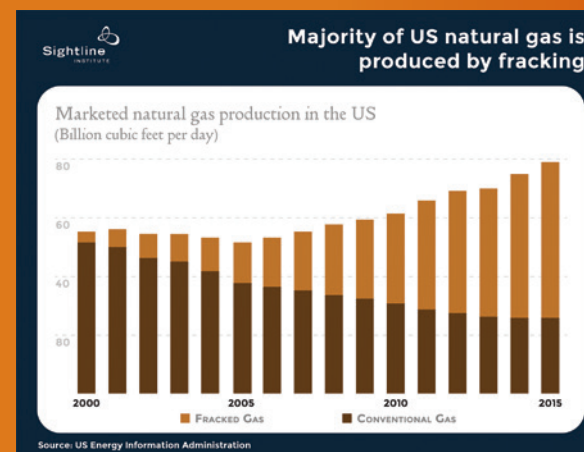
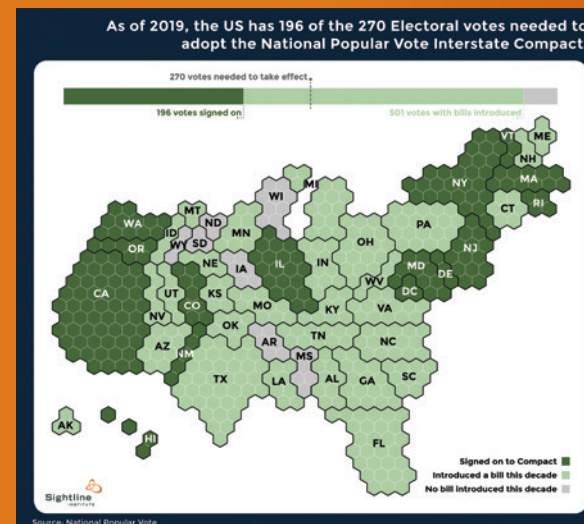
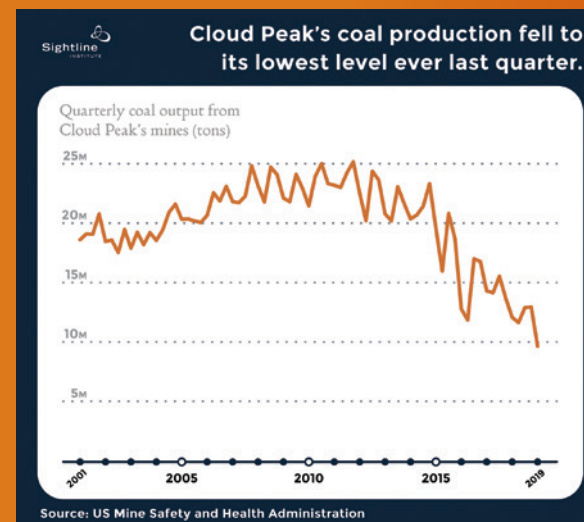
UPGRADING OUR DEMOCRACY:

Electoral reform is gaining traction

Oregon passed the Oregon Voting Rights Act. It authorizes school board elections to use better, more equitable voting systems, including proportional representation. Sightline developed key arguments that advocates used to win passage of the bill.

Your support also allowed us to start developing two new areas of impact:

Learning about the promise of our working lands and forests in carbon sequestration and regenerative agriculture; and expanding green urbanism policies in Alaska—our northernmost Cascadian community!



Sightline in the headlines & across Cascadia:

Sightline was quoted or cited in, or shaped the contents of,

364
media stories in 2019.

In 2019, Sightline.org averaged more than

45,000
unique online visitors per month. Our total email and social media subscriptions grew to just over 82,000.

Sightline staff members were invited to speak at **more than 30 events** in 2019, which were attended by more than **3,200 people**. Events ranged from a speaker series on **housing affordability** in Portland to presenting at a strategy session with the **Affiliated Tribes of NW Indians**, at the **Energy Leadership Summit** in Seattle, and at the **Equitable Redevelopment and Inclusive Growth in Legacy Cities** conference in Washington, D.C., among many others.

STAFF PROFILE:

Margaret Morales

Sightline Researcher



I graduated from college smack in the middle of the Great Recession. Needless to say, there weren't a lot of jobs lying around. My first life lesson as a green grad was: you have to be scrappy.

Between classes for my major, I'd taken several courses on video production. So, I took a leap and started my own business making documentaries for nonprofits. I began on a shoestring budget, mostly creating shorts for websites, borrowing cameras, and editing on public library computers. I took night classes, saved up for my own equipment, and worked up to bigger jobs.

It was dirty, tedious, fascinating, and heartbreaking work. I donned yellow gowns and masks to enter isolation rooms at a children's cancer-care hospital, waded into an aquaculture holding pool stocked with thousands of tilapia, climbed onto landfills from Oregon to Rhode Island, ran behind community organizers pounding the pavement in Vancouver, BC's Downtown Eastside, and filmed activists weaving their way through the world's largest informal clothing market, on the banks of one of the world's most polluted rivers, outside of Buenos Aires. I lugged tripods up muddy hills in a Guatemalan coffee plantation, and slid down muddy hills in a Peruvian Amazon nature preserve. (Now that I think of it, there was a lot of mud during those years!)

About the time I figured out how to white balance the camera and dampen the noisy hum of an A/C unit, I realized I didn't always want to live behind the camera; I wanted to help shape the plot, too. This bend in the road led me to Sightline.

What I treasure most from those muddy years are the lessons in trust. I never had the right to a story, but when one was freely given, I tried to treat it with dignity, and use it for something that mattered.

That's the ethic I strive to bring to my research and writing at Sightline. Over the nearly five years I've been here, I've worked on several of our research teams. I supported our efforts to lower election barriers via democracy vouchers and ranked choice voting. In the last couple of years, I've worked on our Housing

Margaret with her husband, Phil, and children Florida, Clement, and Rocco.

and Urbanism team, advocating for equitable zoning and advising on state-level accessory dwelling unit legislation.

I'm thrilled to now be leading our new Farms and Forests program, focused on carbon sequestration, soil health, and rural livelihoods. My work, as always, has begun with stories. Last summer I traveled across eastern Washington, meeting some of Cascadia's wheat farmers and listening to the complexities of combating soil loss and superweeds. In the fall, I visited some of the Northwest's working forests. I listened to foresters describe the challenges of making a living while managing their stands as living ecosystems, rather than just lumber awaiting harvest. The insights of our region's working land managers are the foundation of this new program, and will help shape the direction of our work.

This winter, I read *Charlotte's Web* to my kids. Like any good story, it means something new every time you come back to it. As I cried my way through the last few pages (my daughter tells me she wants to learn to cry like an adult one day: silently), the closing words hit home:

It is not often that someone comes along who is a true friend and a good writer. Charlotte was both.



Sightline strives to follow Charlotte's example. Her spider voice is tiny, but she wields it to captivate the whole barn and mobilize others to action. Just so, we're not big: a small voice in a large region. But the stories we tell, at the end of the day, are about friendship—friendship to our community, our environment, and our world. And sometimes, we can use them to change things for the better.

Statement of Financial Position

December 31, 2019

ASSETS

Cash and investments	\$ 4,069,078
Donations and grants receivable	450,239
Other assets	34,942
Total assets	\$ 4,554,258

LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS

Liabilities

Accounts payable and accrued expenses	\$ 225,119
Total liabilities	225,119

Net assets

Unrestricted	2,865,849
Temporarily restricted	1,463,291
Total net assets	4,329,139
Total liabilities and net assets	\$ 4,554,258

Statement of Activities

For the Year Ended December 31, 2019

REVENUE

Grants	\$ 2,238,198
Contributions	647,802
Investment revenue	377,204
Fees for services and miscellaneous income	3,661
Total revenue	3,266,866

EXPENSES

Personnel expense	1,599,140
Contract services	230,644
Rent and operations	121,486
Other expenses	62,705
Total expenses	2,013,974
Change in net assets	1,252,892
Net assets, beginning of year	3,076,248
Net assets, end of year	\$ 4,329,139

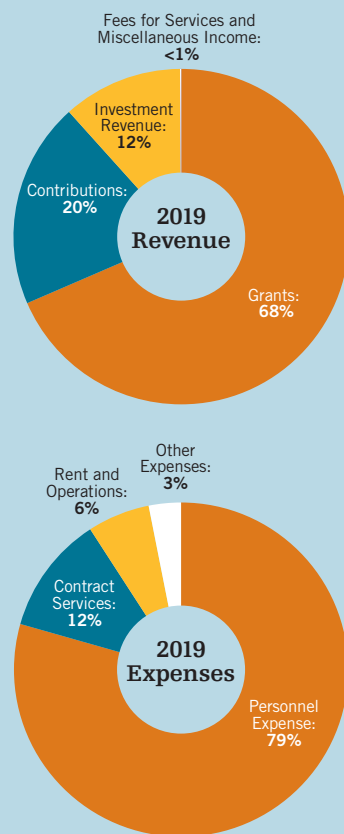
Change in Cash and Investments

For the Year Ended December 31, 2019

Net change in cash and investments	\$ 1,387,311
Cash and investments, beginning of year	2,681,766
Cash and investments, end of year	\$ 4,069,078

These figures have not yet been audited by an independent accountant. For a copy of the audited financial statements, please contact Meghan Robbins by calling 888-447-1880 ext. 110.

A significant amount of revenue received in 2019 was restricted for use in future periods.



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sustainable Northwest

Sightline
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