

News release

GREENPEACE

Indigenous activists, Greenpeace Canada chasing Shell's Arctic rig as Jane Fonda speaks out in support

17 June 2015 (Canadian EEZ in the Pacific Ocean) – Right now, Indigenous and environmental activists are speeding away from the Greenpeace ship *MY Esperanza* in small inflatable boats to confront Shell's massive Arctic drilling platform, the *Polar Pioneer*, 35 nautical miles west of Vancouver Island.

The protest reflects the widespread opposition to Shell's Arctic drilling plans from First Nations and more than seven million people from around the world, due to the threat that increased fossil fuel extraction poses to our climate and the impact of the inevitable oil spills on oceans and coastlines.

The activists' efforts are being supported by renowned actor and activist Jane Fonda, who also addressed 5000 people this past weekend at a Greenpeace-organized event in Vancouver, protesting tar sands pipelines, increased oil tanker traffic and Arctic drilling.

"When our governments fail us, when corporations refuse to bow to public pressure, when Shell insists on capitalizing off a climate crisis of its own making and forces past the more than 7 million people who oppose their Arctic plans — then it is up to us, to individual people, to put our bodies in the way," said Fonda. "What these First Nations activists and Greenpeacers are doing right now is courageous and selfless. They're doing it for all of us, and if Shell pushes past them, then next time, you just might find me standing there next to them."

The activists are attempting to intercept Shell's *Polar Pioneer* drill rig as it sails through Canadian waters west of Vancouver Island on its way to the Alaskan Arctic, where it plans to begin exploratory drilling early July.

"We can't just sit idly by as Shell sails past us, past 7 million people who oppose their plans, past logic and science and decency to risk everything because their greed knows no bounds," said Audrey Siegl, an activist from the Musqueam First Nation, as she left the ship at sunrise to confront the *Polar Pioneer*. "We are determined to hold our ground, but if they do get past us, if they do drill the Arctic — they will not do it quietly or with our consent. These are our waters, our lands, our life they are risking. If they're going to do this, they'll have to push past us."

On Monday, 14 Greenpeace USA activists in kayaks intercepted the *Polar Pioneer* in Seattle's Puget Sound as the rig prepared to depart for the Arctic. They were later arrested then released without charge. In May, hundreds of "kayaktivists" gathered in Seattle to protest Shell's Arctic drilling fleet. On April 6, six Greenpeace activists boarded and occupied the *Polar Pioneer* for seven days in the middle of the Pacific Ocean. And in mid-May, six delegates from as many First Nations, including Siegl, sailed up the Inside Passage on the *Esperanza*, part of Greenpeace's first-ever all-Indigenous delegation, to connect with and support communities opposing tar sands expansion and Shell's Arctic drilling ambitions.

Photo and video resources will be available here later today. Photo and video of previous Shell protests as well as Jane Fonda at Saturday's rally can be found at photo.greenpeace.org

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