

News release

GREENPEACE

President Obama urged to cancel Arctic drilling plans as standoff with Shell vessel ends

After 40-hour standoff, Shell's vessel departs Portland; President Obama urged to cancel Arctic drilling plans

Portland, USA, 31 July 2015 -- The 26 Greenpeace USA activists that formed the 40-hour blockade stopping Shell's icebreaker from leaving port came down last night from the St John's Bridge in Portland, Oregon.

The climbers caused Shell's Fennica [icebreaker to turn around](#) and return to port after a dramatic standoff which was reported on live TV and around the world.

When it was over Greenpeace USA Executive Director Annie Leonard said:

"We are incredibly proud of these climbers and truly humbled by what they have achieved here in Portland.

"The last two days have been a very emotional experience for all of us at Greenpeace, as well as all those who supported this action around the country and the world. Between the kayativists, the streamers, and the blue sky we have seen something new emerge, a sign that we can stand up to one of the most powerful companies in the world if we work together.

"This was a historic achievement not just because it blocked Shell's icebreaker from reaching the Arctic, but because it helped spark an even bigger movement of people to raise their voices for something they believe in.

"Drilling for oil in the Arctic Ocean would be a terrible mistake, and we call on President Obama to join the millions of people who are speaking with one voice to say it loud and clear: ShellNo."

Yesterday a federal judge in Alaska ordered Greenpeace USA to remove the climbers or face a series of escalating fines, starting at US\$2500 per hour and reaching as high as US\$10,000 per hour after a number of days. The activists stayed suspended for several more hours before authorities began approaching on the bridge.

Since Shell's drilling fleet arrived in the Seattle area and then began moving north to the drill site, a broad movement has emerged in the Pacific Northwest of the US and extending to Alaska. In June, activists in kayaks formed a blockade around Shell's drilling rig, the 40,000 ton Polar Pioneer, as it left Seattle for Alaska.

In May, the Obama administration approved Shell's plan to drill for oil in the Chukchi Sea in the Alaskan Arctic. Since that approval, both Shell's rigs, the Polar Pioneer and the Noble Discoverer have failed routine inspections.

The Fennica is one of two primary icebreakers in Shell's drilling fleet, and is equipped with a capping stack, which Shell is federally required to have on site in the Chukchi Sea. Until the MSV Fennica and the capping stack are on site in Alaska and Shell is granted federal drilling permits, the company can only drill top wells, thousands of feet above any projected oil.

Shell's contractors, including Noble Drilling, caused major accidents during its exploratory drilling season in 2012 including the wreck of its rig the Kulluk when it ran aground near Dutch Harbor.

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Photos available here: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/greenpeaceusa09/sets/72157654190738618>

Photos and videos available for download at <http://photo.greenpeace.org/collection/27MZIFJ6SYMV6>

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