

# News release

GREENPEACE

## Greenpeace U.S. climbers block Shell's Arctic-bound vessel

**29 July 2015 - Portland, Oregon** – Twenty-six climbers have blocked Shell's Arctic icebreaking vessel, the *MSV Fennica*, as it attempted to leave Portland, Oregon. The climbers are currently preventing the ship from passing underneath a bridge on its way to rejoin the rest of Shell's Arctic drilling fleet in Alaska. The climbers have enough supplies to last for several days.

The *Fennica* has been in Portland for repairs to a meter-long gash in its hull after it was damaged off the coast of Dutch Harbor, Alaska. According to the latest U.S. permit, the *Fennica* must be at Shell's drill site before Shell can re-apply for federal approval to drill deep enough to reach oil-bearing zones in the Chukchi Sea.

The climbers have displayed individual banners that say “#ShellNo”, “Save the Arctic,” and “President Obama, Last Chance to Say #ShellNo”.

The Portland action is the latest in a series of efforts by activists to draw attention to Shell's Arctic ambitions and to prevent drilling in the polar region this summer. In June, activists in kayaks formed a blockade around Shell's drilling rig the *Polar Pioneer*, as it left Seattle en route to Alaska. Indigenous activist Audry Siegl and Greenpeace Canada then confronted the same rig off the coast of British Columbia as it traveled north.

“Every second we stop Shell counts,” said Annie Leonard, the Executive Director of Greenpeace U.S. “The brave climbers in Portland are now what stand between Shell and Arctic oil. This is President Obama's last chance to wake up and realize the disaster that could happen on his watch. There is still time for him to cancel Shell's lease to drill in the Arctic, and live up to the climate leader we know he can be. Shell has ignored the world's best scientists, as well as millions of people around the world who have all said repeatedly that the melting Arctic is a dire warning, not an invitation.”

In May, the Obama administration approved Shell's plan to drill for oil in the Chukchi Sea in the Alaskan Arctic.

“The inspiring action underway to block Shell from drilling in the Arctic gives me hope and strength as an activist and Indigenous person,” said Audrey Siegl, a First Nations activist who joined with Greenpeace Canada to confront the *Polar Pioneer* off the coast of B.C. in June. “When the people unite, we are more powerful than any corporation.”

“President Obama has the opportunity right now to put the interests of the people ahead of corporate greed,” said Siegl. “Having Shell's damaged ship in Portland means there is still time to say no to Arctic drilling and all the evils it brings. Many Indigenous Peoples of North America believe that we must always think seven generations ahead, and not do things that do not bring benefits to all generations. President Obama should seriously consider implementing this practice. He could start by stopping Shell.”

Greenpeace U.S. is calling on President Obama and the U.S. Department of the Interior to rescind Shell's Arctic drilling lease.

In Canada, companies have been pulling back from plans to drill in Arctic waters. Since December, both Chevron and a partnership made up of Imperial Oil, ExxonMobil and BP have announced the

suspension of plans to drill in the Beaufort Sea in the western Canadian Arctic, citing economic uncertainty and the technical challenges of operating in the Arctic.

-30-

**For more information:**

Peter Louwe, Greenpeace Canada Communications: 778-228-5404, [plouwe@greenpeace.org](mailto:plouwe@greenpeace.org)  
Joe Smyth, Greenpeace U.S. Communications: 831-566-5647 [jsmyth@greenpeace.org](mailto:jsmyth@greenpeace.org)

For photo & video requests:

<http://photo.greenpeace.org/collection/27MZIFJ6SYMV6>

Tim Aubry, Greenpeace U.S. Communications: 703-835-6303 [taubry@greenpeace.org](mailto:taubry@greenpeace.org)

For 24-hour international requests:

Greenpeace International press desk+31 (0)20 718 2470 [pressdesk.int@greenpeace.org](mailto:pressdesk.int@greenpeace.org)