

I offer my sincere gratitude to the judge, prosecutor, court, my attorney, and our Moscow area community for providing this opportunity to present a statement for the court records, describing my intentions, motivations, and the context of my actions and this case.

Over eight intense and difficult months organizing protests to oppose the largest, climate-wrecking, industrial project on Earth, as ExxonMobil/Imperial Oil hauled its tar sands processing components through our otherwise compassionate town, Wild Idaho Rising Tide desperately sought citizen participation, organizational partnerships, legal representation, and situational resolution throughout the region, the country, and the courts. With oil companies commandeering our Idaho roads, we understood and felt responsible for the death, disease, and destruction that their so-called megaloads would impose at their destination in Alberta. But even our closest colleagues and dozens of lawyers abandoned Moscow and Northwest and Northern Rockies interstates, in favor of already burning wildlands, as yet another industrial sacrifice zone for megaload-engendering climate crisis and social injustice. With no other obvious recourse to justice and mercy and little redress to our unreceptive city and state governments, we rallied resistance to these globally significant incursions in our own streets and embraced every emerging idea, ally, and action that promised a small glimmer of hope that we could prevail against this grave evil.

On the evening of March 6, 2011, at the Wild Idaho Rising Tide protest of the final two Highway 95 tar sands transports, we took one last stand and yearned for another heroic demonstration of non-violent civil disobedience through soft blockades of citizens sitting in harm's way. Spontaneously amid mounting frustration, I accomplished the only actions seemingly available to me, symbolic gestures intent on dissuading future abuses of our public resources and civil liberties. Although Imperial Oil delivered all 350 modules on our regional highways to Fort McMurray and many observers doubt the effectiveness of our relentless opposition in solidarity with affected communities, we are deeply appreciative and proud of whatever small impacts we have attained in this dire, local instance of our species spiral toward self-annihilation. However insignificant tossing a six-ounce foam-board protest sign reading "If one oil company is successful, many more will follow" toward a 415,000-pound piece of metal machinery or throwing words and bodies toward the corporate perpetrators and public protectors of our mass oppression and violence, time will tell whether David's stone will ultimately topple Goliath in Idaho.

How does a person of good conscience counter so much implicit evil in ourselves, our collective practices, and our entrenched institutions that advance our perverse desires for energy and resources at the expense of people more deserving of our admiration and emulation than our unacknowledged neglect and violence? Throughout the two years of our campaign against tar sands transportation projects, I have sacrificed all that I can – my work, income, doctoral education, and home – to devote myself to expanding activism against the Canadian Mordor for which Americans are primarily responsible with our consumption of more than 90 percent of tar sands oil. Searching for remedies to our megaload dilemma, I recently visited Alberta tar sands operations by renting a hybrid, alternative fuel vehicle with as many people and as few possessions as it could fit. With hundreds of First Nations residents and concerned activists from around the continent and globe, we walked eight miles through the vast, industrial hell of Syncrude tailings ponds, processing plants, and worker barracks, seeking spiritual and physical healing of the land, water, air, and ourselves, who rightfully grieve daily over tar sands exploitation. As the strong west wind immersed our every pore in the overwhelming chemical stench and heat and pervasive pollution of dusty, lifeless landscapes, I learned about the Natives' plight and their valiant endeavors to stop tar sands development, to preserve the elemental foundations of our shared planetary life not just for themselves but for all humans.

Until only the last few decades in the Fort McMurray area, First Nations people could healthfully live with and from the land, tasting the sweet, clean breezes, waters, and wildlife and feeling the fresh sacredness of an unmodified place, as I once did during my Alaskan youth before the Exxon Valdez oil spill shattered my illusions of wild, inviolate refuges. Now their home territories grow increasingly poisoned by petrochemical fallout from smokestacks and carcinogenic leakage from tailings ponds into the rivers, lakes, and wetlands of their endless boreal forest. How can any citizen of Moscow or of the world allow this to happen? Americans must change, if we are to avert this unconscionable greed and brutality as well as cataclysmic changes in the air, water, climate, and all of the human enterprises that have blossomed under a previously magnanimous sky. But now, in the initial stages of an American revolution to salvage our rights and dignity, economies and environments, and legacy of ingenuity and integrity for the benefit of future generations of all species and elements, most of us will admit the confusing uncertainty of our necessary courses of action.

Some of us are willing to try whatever we can do to avert the ecological collapse that looms closer every day, regardless of legal repercussions, knowing that, as Albert Einstein advised, "We can't solve problems by using the same kind of thinking we used when we created them." Do we really want to continually build up our environs with dead, commercial products and to remorselessly power our prolific machines with energy that literally kills people who live more honest and simple lives than us? Our rapidly overflowing landfills belie the fleeting values we hold for our recent quick and dirty excesses, our plastic frivolity, our purported fossil fuel "needs." Having relinquished decades ago conventional modes of transportation, economic and occupational involvement, and even normal food, clothing, and shelter, I am amazed that Americans not only still cling to our outmoded and reckless habits but have also exponentially compounded our environmental and health damages, especially when we condone by our apathy and inactivity the wealthy corporations and industrial ventures that undermine all possibility for a better way to live. We crave a more meaningful, ages-old existence than our boxed-in, engine-powered lives currently afford us.

If I am guilty of anything here before this court, it is my incessant and earnest determination to retain, restore, and radicalize the public peace, without pathological technology and its accompanying noise, pollution, dependence, entrancement, and nominal progress. Like my First Nations comrades, I cannot forget experiences of peace, beauty, health, and unbounded life in places untouched by industrialization and urbanization. If that is perceived as disturbing our uneasy peace, lifestyles, and culture to deconstruct our unquestioned violence apparent in almost everything we do, so be it. Along with almost 1200 Wild Idaho Rising Tide members, I will continue to pursue every avenue to mobilize against the corporate dirty energy crimes that Americans proliferate through our timid complicity and rampant consumerism. Together, we will challenge and halt the business-as-usual of tar sands, coal, and natural gas extraction and transportation projects across North America, as we encourage pro-active community solutions to impending climate chaos, no matter how unusual. My one- and two-year-old grandgirl bosses and their planetary co-habitants deserve the best Earth that we can bequeath them, full of clean air, water, and land pulsing with all the peace that a respectful and joyful soul can nurture.

Regarding my sentence for striving to do what I understand as good for our planet and people, I request that the court proceed in good faith and consider the complex circumstances that have brought us to this moment. As always, I have come to accept and am prepared to suffer whatever resulting sanctions and discomforts that my rejection of our fossil-fuel-intensive standards of living and conduct and my subsequent actions oblige. Thank you.