

## Shell: Drill rigs coming to Seattle despite pleas for delay (Update)

May 13 2015, by Gene Johnson And Phuong Le

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Protesters hold a sign opposing Shell Oil during a Seattle of the Port of Seattle Commission meeting to address the status of a Port lease with Foss Maritime, Tuesday, May 12, 2015, in Seattle. Seattle Mayor Ed Murray has urged the port to reconsider its two-year, \$13 million lease with Foss Maritime, a company whose client is Shell. (AP Photo/Ted S. Warren)

Royal Dutch Shell is forging ahead with plans to park two Arctic oil drilling rigs in Seattle, despite the city saying it could issue fines in the case and port commissioners asking Shell to wait.

Shell's plan to move the two rigs to Seattle in coming days sets up a showdown between environmentalists and oil exploration advocates and touches off a wider debate about climate change and whether the nation should tap oil and gas reserves in the icy, remote Arctic Ocean off Alaska's coast.

A Shell spokesman said Tuesday it has a valid lease to use about 50 acres of terminal space on Seattle's waterfront and a tight timeline to prepare its fleet for exploratory oil drilling this summer in the Chukchi Sea northwest of Alaska, so it is sticking to plans to park its drilling fleet on Seattle's waterfront.

"Should Shell bring the rigs to Terminal 5 before the appropriate permits are in place, Seattle's Department of Planning and Development will evaluate the situation and could issue a notice of violation," said Jason Kelly, a spokesman for Seattle Mayor Ed Murray said in an email Wednesday.

A city planning spokesman says the city could issue a notice of violation to the Port of Seattle and Foss Maritime, whose client is Shell, requiring compliance by a certain timeframe. The city could then fine those entities \$150 a day for 10 days and then \$500 a day afterward.

Murray last week said the Port of Seattle, a public agency, needs a new permit before it can moor in Seattle. And Port of Seattle commissioners Tuesday night passed a resolution ask Shell's host, Foss Maritime, to tell Shell to delay coming here. The resolution says they want the delay to allow for further legal review of the city's interpretation of a new permit.

At the same time, port commissioners voted unanimously to appeal that city interpretation, which Foss Maritime has already done. The city has said the terminal can't be used as a base for drill rigs because the port's land-use permit is for cargo operations.

Shell cleared a major hurdle Monday when the federal Bureau of Ocean Energy Management approved its plan, though Shell still must get other permits.



Shell's Arctic drilling vessel the Noble Discoverer arrives in Everett, Wash. on Tuesday, May 12, 2015. The rig arrived just as the Port of Seattle voted to delay the arrival of Shell's Polar Pioneer drill rig in Seattle. (Daniella Beccaria/seattlepi.com via AP) MAGS OUT; NO SALES; SEATTLE TIMES OUT; TV OUT; MANDATORY CREDIT

About a dozen protesters in kayaks met one of two drill rigs Shell plans to use, the 514-foot-long Noble Discoverer, as it arrived Tuesday evening in Everett on its way south to Seattle. The second, the 400-foot-long Polar Pioneer, has been parked at an Olympic Peninsula port but is expected to arrive in Seattle later this week to larger protests.

"I now hope Shell will respect the wishes of the Port, the city and the community at large, and not bring an offshore drilling rig into Elliott Bay," Murray said Tuesday in a statement.

A Shell spokesman said the company understands the request for more time but its plans have not changed.

"Given the short windows in which we have to work in the Arctic, and our shared view that Shell's lease and the supporting contract with Foss is valid, we have made the decision to utilize Terminal 5 under the terms originally agreed upon by the parties involved—including the Port of Seattle," Shell spokesman Curtis Smith said in an email Tuesday. "Rig movement will commence in the days to come."

Foss also was adamant. Company President Paul Stevens said the port commission knew what activities would be occurring at the terminal when it granted the lease.

"We're going to proceed," he said.



Activists with the "sHELL NO! Flotilla" group display a banner that reads "Arctic Drilling = Climate Chaos" in front of the Noble Discoverer oil drilling ship after it docked at a Port of Everett, Wash., pier Tuesday evening, May 12, 2015. (Ian Terry/The Herald via AP)

Activists who don't want Shell to drill for oil in the Arctic turned out at the nearly five-hour commission meeting.

"Drilling for oil in the precious Arctic is not on the right side of history," said Richard Hodgin, a drilling opponent from Seattle.

The meeting drew a range of voices, including several people who traveled from Alaska. Representatives of Alaska Native corporations argued that the environmentalists opposing the drilling don't understand the economic needs of Alaska's Natives.



Activist Jordan Van Voast, of Seattle, paddles his kayak feet away from the base of the Noble Discoverer oil drilling ship after it docked at a Port of Everett, Wash., pier Tuesday evening, May 12, 2015. Despite a Seattle port commission request that Royal Dutch Shell delay any moorage of oil exploration vessels in the city pending further legal review, a Shell spokesman said Tuesday his company will bring its rigs to a terminal as planned to prepare for exploratory drilling in Arctic waters. (Ian Terry/The Herald via AP)

John Hopson, mayor of Wainwright, Alaska, a community of Inupiat whalers, said he traveled two days to speak for his allotted two minutes.

"The Arctic isn't just a place of polar bears," he said. "It's a home, my home."

Labor groups representing workers at the Port of Seattle noted the 400-plus jobs that the Foss lease has already brought to the city, while opponents argued that there are no resources available to respond to a major spill in the Chukchi Sea.



Protesters hold a sign opposing Shell Oil during a Seattle of the Port of Seattle Commission meeting to address the status of a Port lease with Foss Maritime, Tuesday, May 12, 2015, in Seattle. Seattle Mayor Ed Murray has urged the port to reconsider its two-year, \$13 million lease with Foss Maritime, a company whose client is Shell. (AP Photo/Ted S. Warren)



Greenpeace activist Zoe Buckley Lennox, of Australia, testifies during a meeting of the Port of Seattle Commission addressing the status of a Port lease with Foss Maritime, Tuesday, May 12, 2015, in Seattle. Seattle Mayor Ed Murray has urged the port to reconsider its two-year, \$13 million lease with Foss Maritime, a company whose client is Shell. (AP Photo/Ted S. Warren)





Alaska State Sen. Cathy Giessel, R-Anchorage, testifies during a meeting of the Port of Seattle Commission addressing the status of a Port lease with Foss Maritime, Tuesday, May 12, 2015, in Seattle. Seattle Mayor Ed Murray has urged the port to reconsider its two-year, \$13 million lease with Foss Maritime, a company whose client is Shell. (AP Photo/Ted S. Warren)



Shell's Arctic drilling vessel the Noble Discoverer arrives in Everett, Wash. on Tuesday, May 12, 2015. The rig arrived just as the Port of Seattle voted to delay the arrival of Shell's Polar Pioneer drill rig in Seattle. (Daniella Beccaria/seattlepi.com via AP) MAGS OUT; NO SALES; SEATTLE TIMES OUT; TV OUT; MANDATORY CREDIT



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Activist Jordan Van Voast, of Seattle, paddles his kayak feet away from the base of the Noble Discoverer oil drilling ship after it docked at a Port of Everett, Wash., pier Tuesday evening, May 12, 2015. Despite a Seattle port commission request that Royal Dutch Shell delay any moorage of oil exploration vessels in the city pending further legal review, a Shell spokesman said Tuesday his company will bring its rigs to a terminal as planned to prepare for exploratory drilling in Arctic waters. (Ian Terry/The Herald via AP)



The Noble Discoverer oil drilling ship passes by neighborhoods in south Everett, Wash., near Pigeon Creek Beach on its way to docking at a Port of Everett pier in the Tuesday evening, May 12, 2015. (Ian Terry/The Herald via AP)



Activists with the "SHELL NO! Flotilla" group watch as the Noble Discoverer oil drilling ship comes in to dock at a Port of Everett, Wash., pier Tuesday evening, May 12, 2015. Ten kayaktivists met the oil rig, which has a 175-foot-tall oil derrick, to protest its arrival in the Puget Sound. (Ian Terry/The Herald via AP)



Kayaktivists Jordan Van Voast and Martin Adams hold a sign in protest of the arrival of Shell's Arctic drilling vessel the Noble Discoverer as it came into Everett, Wash. on Tuesday, May 12, 2015. The rig arrived just as the Port of Seattle voted to delay the arrival of Shell's Polar Pioneer drill rig in Seattle. (Daniella Beccaria/seattlepi.com via AP)



Activists Jordan Van Voast, left, of Seattle, and Martin Adams, right, of Vashon Island, prepare to hoist a banner in protest of the Noble Discoverer oil drilling ship after it docked at a Port of Everett, Wash., pier Tuesday evening, May 12, 2015. (Ian Terry/The Herald via AP)



Green Peace activists Christophe Peyronel, left, and Sim McKenna guide a zodiac powerboat into Port Gardner near the Port of Everett in pursuit of the Noble Discoverer oil drilling ship on Tuesday, May 12, 2015, in Everett, Wash. Two Shell drill ships are expected to arrive in the Puget Sound this week, including the Nobel Discoverer which was set to arrive in Everett on Tuesday. (Ian Terry/The Herald via AP)





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Citation: Shell: Drill rigs coming to Seattle despite pleas for delay (Update) (2015, May 13) retrieved 25 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2015-05-shell-seattle-oil-drill-rigs.html>

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