

## **Public Testimony to the Port of Seattle Commissioners, December 8, 2020**

Good afternoon Commissioners, Director Metruck, and Staffmembers, My name is Jordan Van Voast and I am a settler here on Duwamish land. In acknowledging the first people, I remind myself to be humble, to think far into the past and future, with an intention to care for the land, air, water, and wellbeing of all life, because we are all connected. To fully appreciate this I make a daily practice of stepping back from the materialistic mindset and personal profit and touch the circle of life.

With the elections behind us, there is a collective urge to get back to business as usual. I am here to remind you – again – of the folly in this thinking. Mother Earth has a knee on her neck, and she is crying out “I can’t breathe”. November was the warmest month on record<sup>1</sup> according to the EU, and 2020 is on track to be the warmest year. Resource consumption by the global North, which includes our flight and cruise, isn’t sustainable. People in the global south are dying due to our choices. The United States currently has the worst COVID-19 outbreak in the world, and recent attempts to restart cruising resulted in predictable disease outbreaks.

In closing, I share the words of Pope Francis: “At this time we can note the rise of a false or superficial ecology which bolsters complacency and a cheerful recklessness. As often occurs in periods of deep crisis which require bold decisions, we are tempted to think that what is happening is not entirely clear. Superficially, apart from a few obvious signs of pollution and deterioration, things do not look that serious, and the planet could continue as it is for some time. Such evasiveness serves as a license to carry on with our present lifestyles and models of production and consumption. This is the way human beings contrive to feed their self-destructive vices: trying not to see them, not to acknowledge them, delaying the important decisions and pretending that nothing will happen.”<sup>2</sup> Thank you.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.independent.co.uk/environment/climate-crisis-november-warmest-2020-b1767263.html>

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.vatican.va/content/dam/francesco/pdf/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco\\_20150524\\_enciclica-laudato-si\\_en.pdf](http://www.vatican.va/content/dam/francesco/pdf/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si_en.pdf)