

Climate Change, Air Pollution, and Ecosystem Destruction: How Ocean Industrialization Can Serve as an Intellectual History of Environmental Thought

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environmental
HISTORY

Required reading

- Stefan Huebner, “Tackling Climate Change, Air Pollution, and Ecosystem Destruction: How US-Japanese Ocean Industrialization and the Metabolist Movement’s Global Legacy Shaped Environmental Thought (c. 1950s–Present)” *Environmental History* 25.1 (2020), 1-27.

UN “Sustainable Floating Cities” roundtable, April 3, 2019

Amina J. Mohammed, UN Deputy Secretary-General:

“This need to explore frontier issues also applies to cities, which are often our testing ground for new ideas and solutions. We live in a time when we cannot continue building cities the way New York or Nairobi were built. We must build cities with solutions for low-emission development — scaling safe and electric-powered public transport solutions and changing the grid on which cities rely to clean energy solutions. We must build cities for people, not cars. And we must build cities knowing that they will be on the frontlines of climate-related risks — from rising sea levels to storms.

Floating cities could also experiment with ways to grow their food right on their doorstep — for example through hydroponics and sustainable aquaculture. A floating dairy farm is even being constructed in Rotterdam. As experimentation with floating cities moves forward, there is also an opportunity to design them in a manner that fits local needs. From traditional houseboat communities to high-tech experiments, there are many examples to learn from.”

Ocean industrialization, market libertarianism, and “state evasion”? Part 1

Gaylord Nelson (1916-2005), U.S. Senator (D-WI, 1963-1981), Nov. 1969:

“It is the economic profit to be found in the sea that attracts and brings closer the threat of cataclysm which Dr. Paul Ehrlich, a noted ecologist, projected recently. He predicted that unless current trends reversed, the ocean could end as a significant source of life in ten years with the end of man coming a short time later.

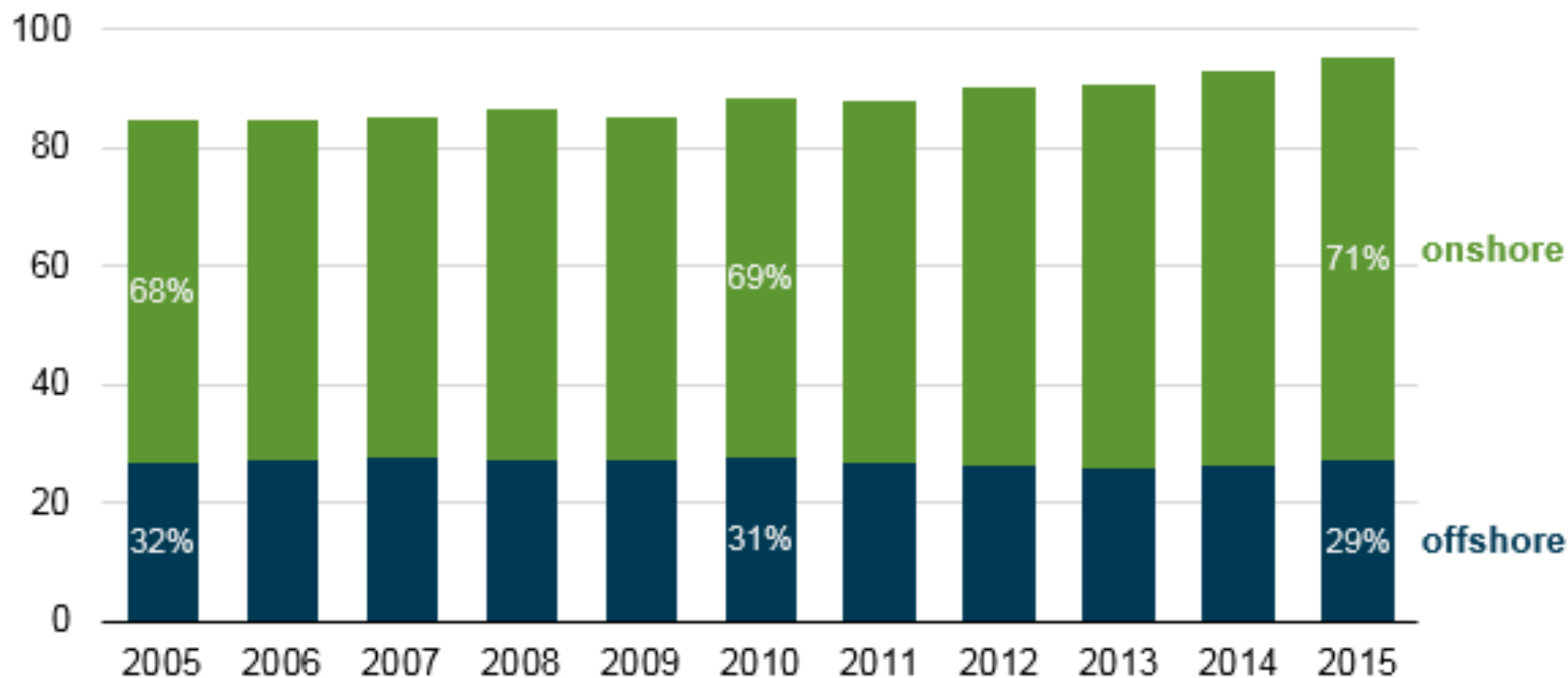
The massive oil leak off Santa Barbara, California, which killed fish and sea fowl could be the first dramatic warning of this end. Other commercial ventures are under consideration as developers look to the possibilities of rich returns from moving parts of crammed megalopolis to floating cities. One developer is planning a floating jetport in the ocean waters off New York City. Such a facility might well be beyond the reach of enforcement of any Federal agency regulations.”

Ocean industrialization, market libertarianism, and “state evasion”? Part 2

“Live free at sea” (2019). Interview with Joe Quirk, President, Seasteading Institute, San Francisco. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vDYO4_845Is

Global crude oil production, 2005-15

million barrels per day



Discussion

- Thinking about the interaction between ocean and coastal industrialization, what is your assessment of past and present proposals for moderating the related environmental and social impacts?
- Thinking about proto-ecomodernist ideas and the trajectory of ocean industrialization, what is your assessment of their positive and negative results?
- Thinking about ocean industrialization, environmental justice, and the capacity or willingness of coastal states to enforce legislation, what is your assessment of market libertarian and UN-guided projects?
- Thinking about the past and future of ocean industrialization, what is your assessment of the proposed commercialization of climate security and disaster resilience?

Sources

- Gaylord Nelson: *Congressional Record. Proceedings and Debates of the 91st Congress, First Session*. Vol. 115, No. 176 (29 October 1969): 1-4. Based on: Gaylord Nelson, “Our Polluted Planet” *The Progressive* 33,11 (1969): 13-17.
- Amina Mohammed, Sustainable Floating Cities Can Offer Solutions to Climate Change Threats Facing Urban Areas, Deputy Secretary-General Tells First High-Level Meeting, <https://www.un.org/press/en/2019/dsgsm1269.doc.htm>. Accessed December 11, 2019.
- Global crude oil production (October 25, 2016). <https://www.eia.gov/todayinenergy/detail.php?id=28492>. Accessed December 11, 2019.