

1/13 Hearing Testimony from:

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I would like to thank the Commission for the opportunity to address this hearing. My name is Lowen Berman, I am a Portland resident. I am speaking as a representative of the Portland Climate Action Coalition consisting of 350PDX, Portland Rising Tide, Portland Raging Grannies, the Unitarian Universalist Community for Earth, PDX Bike Swarm, Sustainable Energy & Economy Network and others. However, my comments here are my own.

I would like to address each member of this commission personally and individually, my heart to yours. You are good people. As Planning and Sustainability Commissioners you have been chosen because of your extraordinary concern for our City and our environment. But as Commissioners you are necessarily acting within an overarching cultural, political and economic system. This system, which has as its basic values and priorities putting individual profit ahead of the common good, never ending growth in a finite and fragile world, acceptance of extreme human inequality and disregard of non-human life, is driving the world to catastrophe on a level never before experienced in human history. We have been told by all of the world's best scientists and scholars that if we continue on as we have been, we are facing catastrophic floods, droughts, storms, agricultural failures, water shortages, massive climate migration and the spread of disease carrying insects. The costs associated with these calamities will be unimaginable.

Today you are being required to make a choice regarding your role as Commissioners. It would certainly be both comfortable and perhaps even satisfying to consider the concerns and priorities that the mayor and others expect from you. To look narrowly at short term considerations such as jobs created, taxes generated, economic growth encouraged. Perhaps to take into account issues of political and economic influence and trade-offs. To follow this path might appear reasonable, rational and realistic. However, to do so would require that you ignore the magnitude of the onrushing climate crisis. That you turn a blind eye to the threat to the survival of our own civilization as well as the loss of millions of plant and animal species. It would mean ignoring the welfare of all of our children and of generations yet to come.

You may have been told that propane is a "bridge fuel" that it will help in the fight against climate change. Propane is not a bridge, it is a gangplank. When the propane that this project proposes is burned each day it will create nearly 1.5 times the CO2 produced daily from all of the passenger vehicles in Multnomah County. Double that if the project's expected expansion

were to take place. The fracking and related “unconventional” extraction activities that will be the ultimate source of this propane are already causing widespread devastation of huge areas of Alberta, Canada. Adding propane to the mix would only serve to encourage these processes by making them more profitable. The propane shipped through Portland would not be replacing coal or oil, rather it would be adding to the overload of greenhouse gases already in existence. We have been warned repeatedly that, if we have any chance of survival, we must reduce not add to, the use of fossil fuels; not in the future but beginning right now.

So what can you do as Commission members? You can choose to accept your *fundamental* responsibility to all of the human and non-human life occupying our City, our State and our planet, and take into your hands your full power as free human beings. You can accept your opportunity and obligation to break out of the culture of greed and irresponsibility that is holding us all captive and vote to reject this proposal. Moving forward, you can reject all other proposals for expansion of Portland’s fossil fuel infrastructure. You can help lead the City in dismantling our existing fossil fuel energy facilities. You can let the world know that Portland is a Climate Champion, not just in words, but in deeds. You can help lead the country and the world in redefining “development” and “success” from narrow economic concepts that benefit only a few into concepts that truly encompass sustainability, equality and love of the beautiful world that we have inherited and are now destroying. So much has been done to earn Portland accolades for its leadership in sustainability. But to move forward with this proposal would be to undermine these gains and to undeniably detract from our City’s position as a sustainability leader.

To choose to disallow this proposal, and others like it, would likely involve personal difficulties and could require substantial courage on your part. However, the choice cannot be avoided. As we used to say in the 60’s, “You can either be part of the problem or part of the solution.” As a fellow Portlander and as a fellow human being, I beg of you to become part of the solution.

Thank you for your time and kind attention.