

Portland Planning and Sustainability Bureau - Testimony Regarding Proposed Propane Terminal

My name is Dr. Kelly O'Hanley. As an obstetrician gynecologist, it has been my privilege to provide medical care in various clinical settings. I also taught classes at Harvard and Stanford to the next generation of physicians. With a public health degree, I worked in 40 countries worldwide. I have devoted a career to protecting mothers and babies. Therefore I am alarmed by the issue now before us – the prospect of a propane terminal threatening the well-being of countless mothers and babies . . . and not just those of our species. I can assure you that a propane terminal in Portland is not in their best interest – for reasons that include poorer health from degraded air quality, the possibility of catastrophic accidents from explosions or an earthquake, and – let us not forget - the worsening of climate change.

This Bureau's mandate is to ensure the sustainability for our fair city. What can sustainability mean vis a vis transport and use of fossil fuels? What time frame does the Bureau apply when it considers sustainability? A few short years? Decades? Or a timeframe that stretches well beyond? If the latter – you must say “no” to a new propane terminal being placed here in Portland. We can do better.

A few days ago, California's Governor Jerry Brown announced, “Taking significant amounts of carbon out of our economy without harming its vibrancy is exactly the sort of challenge at which California excels. This is exciting, it is bold and it is absolutely necessary if we are to have any chance of stopping potentially catastrophic changes to our climate system.”

Why in the world can't we Portlanders adopt such a bold attitude? What prevents us from leading the nation in green jobs and a low-carbon economy of tomorrow? Nothing but our collective will. We can further develop innovative solar technologies and hydroelectric power as well as improve energy efficiencies. We can attract the people and business that will lead to true sustainability. We can protect all our mothers and babies.

Thank you for carefully considering this testimony.

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