

TESTIMONY

Marilyn Sewell

Portland Sustainability Commission

January 13, 2015

Thank you for this opportunity to speak. My name is Marilyn Sewell, and I am the Minister Emerita at the First Unitarian Church here in Portland. I would like to add a moral perspective to the issue at hand.

I have long been concerned about climate change, reading and learning about the issue. The wisest and most informed people I know are pessimistic about our ability to address the issue in a timely manner.¹ I am frightened that we will not be able to do enough, soon enough, to counter global warming—not because it is an impossible task, but because of the lack of political will. History makes demands of each generation, and climate change is the salient issue of our generation. It falls to all of us who understand the critical nature of the issue to do what we can to preserve our earth.

You on this Commission have a special charge just now—you have been asked to amend the zone regulations allowing Pembina to transport hazardous propane at the Port of Portland, propane which will have a measurable effect on CO2 emission, both locally and globally. As is always the case, poor people and indigenous people will be the first to suffer, but none of us will escape, for we are all part of one earth. We will all be called to account by our children and grandchildren, who will say to us, what did you do to stop this devastation of our earth?

We have an opportunity in Oregon to continue to lead on this issue, as we have done previously on environmental issues. We have led, and others have followed, in our land use regulation, in our bottle bill, etc. I urge you to say no to the zone change requested, so that Portland and Oregon may continue our leadership in this, our most crucial environmental issue.

¹ William Nordhaus, an economist from Yale, in his book *Climate Casino* lays out the problem methodically, and then states that he fears we do not have the political will to solve the problem. Naomi Klein's new book, *This Changes Everything*, is not hopeful either.