

Portland Planning and Sustainability Commission Meeting
January 13, 2015

Re: Planning and Sustainability Commission Public Hearing: Terminal 6 Environmental Overlay Zone
Boundary and Code Amendment

Transcript of Remarks: Elizabeth Wainwright, Executive Director, Maritime Fire and Safety Association
and Merchants Exchange.

Chair Baugh and members of the Commission, thank you for the opportunity to speak with you this afternoon. I want to talk about the vessel response system and vessel traffic on the Columbia River. For the record, my name is Elizabeth Wainwright. I am the Executive Director for two (2) organizations: Maritime Fire & Safety Association and Merchants Exchange, both based in Portland, OR. MFSA is a bi-state, member-based non-profit organization funded by vessel fees. Members are marine public and private facilities. MFSA is the leading provider and advocate for safe, environmentally responsible and cost effective vessel response services to commercial vessels transiting the Columbia River. The Merchants Exchange, a regional non-profit member based organization, provides a number of services to the regional maritime community including data collection and information sharing.

MFSA has provided an Oil Spill Vessel Response Plan for ships and barges since 1992. Our Vessel Response Plan is regulated and approved by OR Dept. of Environmental Quality and WA Dept. of Ecology. There currently is a comprehensive system of not only response but of prevention and preparedness. This robust system includes significant training, drilling and a cache of equipment worth \$5.5million strategically located through the Columbia River to ensure immediate response and clean up. Since its founding in 1983, MFSA has supported training and acquisition of specialized firefighting equipment for 13 local fire agencies along the Columbia to respond to marine vessel fires. These response systems are a part of the Columbia River marine transportation system. The transportation system is a network of local non-profit organizations, government agencies, public entities including the Port of Portland (a leader in the formation of MFSA) and commercial companies that others today have described well/will describe.


The Merchants Exchange is the leading provider of information and related services to all stakeholders of the regional intermodal transportation system. As our records attest, goods and services have safely moved along the Columbia River well before the founding of the Merchants Exchange in 1879. We understand there is a concern about additional vessel traffic. In fact, the number of ships & barges transiting the Columbia River has decreased since the most recent peak in 2000. In 2000 there were 2283 vessels, in 2011 there were 1320 vessels and we closed 2014 with 1705 vessels.

The Columbia River clearly has the capacity and systems in place to support additional vessel traffic created from facility development.

Many of my staff and I have worked in the Columbia River maritime transportation business for over 35 years. My livelihood and that of my staff and colleagues are dependent on a vibrant economy that includes safe operations on the Columbia. We are dedicated professionals that live in the communities. I am proud of the work we do, the services we provide, and contributions we make to this region.

We ask the PSC to approve the code amendment to allow the safe handling of propane at Terminal 6 between a storage tank and the vessel, an activity that I understand is currently allowed by both truck and rail today.

I would like to close by saying we would be glad to provide more information on our robust response system and marine transportation system to the council members and staff. Thank you.

MERCHANTS EXCHANGE			OF PORTLAND, OREGON	
Elizabeth Wainwright Executive Director				
200 SW Market Street, Suite 190, Portland, Oregon 97201 Phone: 503-220-2091 / Fax: 503-295-3660 Email: wainwright@pdxmex.com				
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