

Testimony to PSC 10.28.14, by Timme Helzer, Hayden Island

Portland's Planning and Sustainability Commission:

Your public hearings last year revealed the "facts on the ground" about marine industrial development of West Hayden Island. And, in the end, you got it right. The key facts are these:

First, the Port of Portland withdrew its industrial development proposal because your mitigation requirements made the estimated cost of their plans "uncompetitive" in this marine services market. But, the Port's actual costs, based on calculations of the Port's own financial offices reported to this commission, would have made those "as built" costs approximately four times higher than other estimates they claimed at the time of their proposal withdrawal. The Port's real costs show the WHI industrial site is neither economically feasible or sustainable, estimated revenues may never pay off its construction bond indebtedness even after 40 years, and it will not produce the many long-term "family wage" jobs the Port has promised. Take away: West Hayden Island will fail as an industrial site, and destroy wildlife habitat.

Second, PSC testimony showed an I-5 Columbia River replacement bridge is absolutely essential for industrial development on WHI. But, the previous ill-conceived CRC plans, its massive fiscal waste and mismanagement, and weak political skill and little public will led to that plan's defeat this year. However, should WHI become a marine industrial development site without a new bridge, according to ODOT and PBOT, its traffic will choke Hayden Island and I-5 with hundreds of additional diesel rigs and thousands of autos day and night, snaking their way through the island's slowly recovering retail and residential areas. Take away: WHI industrial site traffic will kill local business.

Last, according to the World Health Organization, diesel exhaust particulates directly cause lung cancer, emphysema, and heart disease, especially in the elderly and disabled. And, our own Multnomah County Health Department's preliminary Human Impact Studies reported last year that traffic pollution from development of WHI will result in toxic air conditions 65 times more toxic than acceptable clean air levels. You also learned that many of WHI's nearest neighbors are elderly and disabled. Take away: WHI industrial site will kill people and wildlife.

In summary, 1) industrial development of WHI is economically unfeasible and unsustainable, and will destroy a major portion of the city's high-value urban natural wildlife habitat. And, 2) without a new I-5 bridge over the Columbia, a WHI industrial site will create huge traffic jams on I-5 and across Hayden Island. But, most damning, 3) toxic air pollution from WHI industrial development will be at least 65 times more toxic than safe air quality levels set by this state.

Conclusion: Trust your earlier judgment from August, 2013. Now recommend to the Draft Comprehensive Plan Commission to remove all of West Hayden Island from further consideration as a feasible future industrial lands site. You know it is not a feasible industrial lands site, and you know it never will be. Do the right thing, and just remove it from the Comprehensive Plan as an industrial lands site.

Thank you.

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