

Jan. 14, 2015

My name is Christine Abernathy. I'm a native Portlander, a long time resident, and a retired Portland Public high school English teacher who will turn seventy in two weeks. Seventy years in a place engenders a deep love of the land, rivers, and skies. When citizens love a place, we want to protect that place from harm so we can enjoy it as well as future generations.

During the 1990's I, along with biology, math, and social studies teachers, taught an interdisciplinary class which examined the history, literature, biology, and economy of the Pacific Northwest. Students visited such places as Bonneville Dam, Oswald West State Park, the Columbia River Gorge. We saw inner city kids come alive to nature: its beauty and its gifts. So I know that nature is important to young people, too.

Fossil fuel companies are tenacious when promoting increased extraction of shale oil and fracked gas to provide continuing financial returns to company employees and stockholders. Once that oil and gas has been extracted, however, it is worthless unless it can be transported to U.S. refineries or exported out of the country. Petroleum companies promise safety but records show a history of spills, leaks, and explosions, which often cause long lasting damage to soil, water, and other life forms.

The proposed Pembina propane export terminal is a bad idea for Portland, If it is to be true to its own climate goals, the City Council must not approve a weakening of zoning protection for the fragile riparian zone on the Columbia River where the proposed terminal would be sited. When the propane passing through the proposed export terminal is burned, it would emit close to 10,000 tons of CO2 daily which would affect the climate and carbon emissions around the globe. The sky does not have barriers to contain one country's pollution from others.

Portland is better than this. Climate Change is real! In October 2014 the Portland City Council adopted the Climate Change Preparation Strategy and the associated Risk and Vulnerabilities Assessment which states: "Carbon emissions from the burning of fossil fuels and from land use changes, including deforestation, are the primary drivers of the climate change we are experiencing today and expect to see in the future. Reducing carbon emissions remains a crucial component of climate change preparation work." <https://www.portlandoregon.gov/bps/article/505645>

The council must not approve a weakening of the zoning protection that would allow the Pembina project to go forward. Instead, Portland needs to invest in green, sustainable projects so that future generations can continue to enjoy the beauty and promise of the Earth.

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