

Long Range

INDEPENDENT AND LOCALLY OWNED SINCE 1890

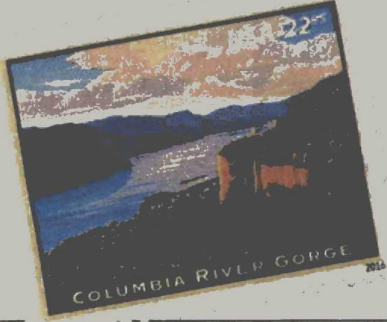


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**CLARK COUNTY, C1**  
Scenic area gets a Gorge-ous stamp



**LIFE/NEIGHBORS, D1**  
A guide to new downtown businesses

Hundreds speak at hearing on controversial project



ARIANE KUNZE/The Columbian

Hundreds waited hours Tuesday afternoon and night to comment on the proposed oil terminal in front of the Energy Facility Site Evaluation Council, which is overseeing its environmental review.

## Oil terminal draws crowd

By **BROOKS JOHNSON**  
Columbian staff writer

A chorus of hundreds on Tuesday sang familiar but very different refrains on the oil terminal proposed for the Port of Vancouver.

It's an economic bounty.  
It's an environmental disaster.  
We can do this safely.

We can't do this safely. Their discordant voices echoed throughout the enormous Hall B at the Clark County Event Center at the Fairgrounds. State and local representatives who will play a large role in determining the fate of what would be the nation's largest oil transfer terminal listened on as the voices contin-

ued through the afternoon and late into the evening. More than two years after Port of Vancouver commissioners unanimously approved the project, the rhetoric for and against the project remained as heated as ever.

"The likelihood of a catastrophe becomes not a probability but an eventuality," Russell Freeman told

members of the state's Energy Facility Site Evaluation Council, which is doing an environmental review of the rail-to-marine oil terminal slated to handle 360,000 barrels of oil per day.

"If it can't be done safely, then it won't be built. We live by the same

**OIL TERMINAL, Page A2**

## County council repeals policies

Newly expanded board also will revisit tax decrease

By **KAITLIN GILLESPIE**  
Columbian staff writer

The lines appear to have already been drawn for the recently expanded Clark County council.

In their first meeting Tuesday, the now five members of the Clark County council voted 3-2 to repeal eight resolutions championed by Republican Councilor David Madore that covered a spectrum of transportation and zoning issues. They also voted, by the same breakdown, to revisit the 2 percent property tax levy decrease the county council approved early last month, laying the groundwork for that decision to be reversed.

Councilor Jeanne Stewart, a Republican, new Councilor Julie Olson, a Republican, and new council Chairman Marc Boldt, no party preference, voted to repeal the resolutions approved last month, citing not the content of those resolutions, but the way they were approved before the new councilors were seated. The council shifted from a three-person board to a five person board this year.

"These are sweeping, profound policies that we're making," said Stewart, who until last month was often in the minority on the board. She added: "They will make a direction for all of us, including the new council."

### 'Start over'

In her first decision on the Clark County council, Olson emphasized the importance of adopting and considering policies that guide decision making as a full five-member council.

"This discussion we're having tonight about the implications of these policies is why we need to start over with them so we can have this discussion as a group, as a board," Olson said. She added that she'd

**COUNCIL, Page A2**



NATALIE BEHRING/The Columbian

Maureen Hildreth, center, voices her opposition to the proposed rail-to-marine oil terminal at a rally during a break in Tuesday's hearing at the Clark County Event Center at the Fairgrounds. Hundreds gathered throughout the day to offer formal testimony on the proposed terminal at the Port of Vancouver, which would be the nation's largest, receiving an average of 360,000 barrels of oil per day.

## Environmental groups rally against project

By **DAMEON PESANTI**  
Columbian staff writer

Inside the hospitality room set up by oil terminal advocates, a small crowd quietly dined on antipasto skewers and tiny ciabatta bun sandwiches. In an outbuilding across the walkway, throngs of

people munched on Oreos and cheered when a man on stage held high a big dead fish.

"This fish right here swam down the Clackamas River out the Willamette River possibly out to Japan. ... We caught it today in the Clackamas River and it is something to behold,"

Northwest Steelhead Association executive director Bob Rees said, pointing to the steelhead in his colleague's hands.

Rees was one of several speakers from a number of environmentally focused groups at a dinner-hour demonstration during the Energy Facility Site

Evaluation Council hearing on the proposed Port of Vancouver oil transfer terminal.

During the hearing at the Clark County Event Center at the Fairgrounds, the administrative law judge for EFSEC,

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On the Web

VIDEO with these stories at

www.columbian.com

## Council

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like to bring all eight topics back for discussion, but as a united board.

Tuesday's heated meeting showed a clear shift in power from the majority once enjoyed by Madore and Republican Councilor Tom Mielke, as over and over again the two councilors argued for the resolutions to be maintained.

"I'm just flabbergasted," Madore said as the council, for the eighth time, prepared to vote to repeal one of his resolutions. "This is supposed to be fixing dysfunctional government?"

A lively crowd came Tuesday, and there was standing room only in the hearing chamber until an overflow room was opened. Familiar critics of the council, as

well as local conservative leaders, booed, clapped and shouted as each vote came down.

Christian Berrigan, a state committeeman for the Clark County Republican Party, warned the council that their votes would not be interpreted as an objection on the way they were approved.

"This vote is about your position on the policies," Berrigan said.

Phil Haggerty was also among those who urged the council to uphold the policies.

"Don't throw the baby out with the bath water," he said.

But there was also a large crowd who spoke in support of repealing the resolutions.

"It's a shame that we're here on a contentious resolution right off the bat," said Bridget McLeman, urging the council to go back and address each item individually to find consensus as a full board.

Jackie Lane also urged



TOMMY RHODES for the Columbian

The newly expanded Clark County council has its first meeting Tuesday. From left, Councilor Jeanne Stewart, Councilor Julie Olson, Council Chairman Marc Boldt, Councilor David Madore and Councilor Tom Mielke kicked off the year with a contentious meeting.

the council to back away from Madore's resolutions.

"End the divisiveness," she said.

The council, again to

the protest of Madore and Mielke, voted to revisit the county's planned 2 percent property tax levy decrease during next week's public

hearing.

The 2 percent property tax cut was approved early last month despite protests from other elected officials

including Republican Auditor Greg Kimsey, Democratic Treasurer Doug Lasher and Republican Assessor Peter Van Nortwick. Budget staff estimate the cut, if upheld, would force the county to dip into its reserve funds, bringing them below the \$23 million required by county policy.

Mielke asked his fellow councilors how many more items they plan to revisit in the coming weeks.

"We already had a discussion, and we already took a vote," Mielke said.

The county council will meet again at 1:30 p.m. today for its weekly board time session in the sixth-floor hearing room of the Public Service Center, 1300 Franklin St., Vancouver.

KAITLIN GILLESPIE: 360-735-4517; kaitlin.gillespie@columbian.com; twitter.com/news ladykatie

## Oil terminal

From Page A1

standards. This project will provide jobs, good-paying jobs," Mark Holtz said in support of the project that would be built by Vancouver Energy, a joint venture between Tesoro Corp. and Savage Cos.

Nearly 400 people signed up to testify at the first of two Vancouver hearings. Terminal opponents hailing from throughout the Northwest vastly outnumbered supporters at Tuesday's hearing as the terminal, first proposed in 2013, reached a major milestone. Once the evaluation council finishes its environmental review, likely later this year, it will make a recommendation to Gov. Jay Inslee, who gets final say over the project.

In addition to being a fight focused on safety and jobs in the state of Washington, the terminal has become, to some, a battle of national and international scope over the future of fossil fuels and a battleground over national energy policy. It's a proxy war in which some groups with ties well beyond Vancouver have decided to stand their ground against project backers who are fighting an uphill battle to win broader community support.

Tuesday's hearing drew comments of every stripe, though it was meant to focus on the project's draft Environmental Impact Statement, released in November. That massive document has been used by opponents and supporters alike to bolster their arguments for or against the terminal.

The risks to life, ecology and property, as evidenced by the environmental review, are just too high, opponents say. An average of four 120-car unit trains of oil per day would travel through the Columbia River Gorge and unload onto cargo ships destined for West Coast



Photos by NATALIE BEHRING/The Columbian

Ann Donnelly of Vancouver speaks in favor of the proposed oil-by-rail terminal at Tuesday's hearing. Supporters spoke often during the first half of the hearing, but opponents dominated discussions overall.



Dozens of people queue up to register to voice their opinions on the proposed oil-transfer terminal Tuesday at a hearing at the Clark County Event Center at the Fairgrounds.

ports. That has stoked fears of derailments, spills and explosions.

Port of Vancouver Commissioner Eric LaBrant, a terminal opponent who took office this month, joined the chorus of opposition.

"Residents' questions have been ignored. Calls for better emission controls have been ignored," said LaBrant, speaking as president of the Fruit Valley Neighborhood Association. "We oppose the terminal for these and future problems that would likely also be ignored."

But supporters say the \$210 million terminal can be built and operated safely and environmentally responsibly.

"I urge everyone not to get distracted by misconceptions," said Ann Donnelly of Vancouver. "No risk has been identified that can not be mitigated by the well-tested tech and good planning that Vancouver Energy is proposing."

The hearing went on for more than eight hours, with hundreds speaking as individuals or on behalf of organizations to influence the evaluation council. Another hearing will be held Tuesday starting at 5 p.m. at the Event Center.

Those in favor of the terminal, visibly outnumbered, wore green thumbs-up cards and held blue signs championing Tesoro and

Savage for their safety record and for the project's economic potential — about \$2 billion in labor income during construction and 15 years of operation, according to Vancouver Energy.

"We see this as an opportunity for the environmental community to partner with Vancouver Energy to create a showcase of stewardship," said Rob Rich, who testified at the hearing.

Those opposed wore red and were chastised for waving signs, then their fingers, in response to anti-terminal speakers, showing their evident supermajority at the hearing.

"Our safety is in your hands. We urge you to tell Gov. Inslee to deny the project," said Jared Smith, president of the local International Longshore and Warehouse Union.

### Protest rally

During the hearing's dinner break, a sea of red filled a cool "barn" across from the meeting hall as a rally brought music and speakers together to protest the terminal.

The environmental coalition Stand Up to Oil said

## Protest

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Cassandra Noble, had to repeatedly remind both supporters and opponents not to wave signs, their fingers or cheer after speakers finished. But demonstrators carried their pent-up energy and released it at the rally next door, which was put together by the environmental coalition Stand Up to Oil.

A rock band played as people came in. Groups of individuals milled about in the chilly building; most wore the color red as a sign of solidarity against the terminal. Large yellow flags depicted black tanker cars with the words "too risky" painted over them in red letters. The environmental organizations signed people up for mailing lists and preached the potentially disastrous consequences of the terminal.

"Who's been arrested? Raise your hands," Orvie Danzuka, a Warm Springs Tribal Council repre-

sentative from Oregon, asked. After the crowd's cheering response, she asked: "Who's willing to be arrested?"

The crowd cheered again.

Vancouver resident Randy Kessel came to the hearing and attended the demonstration to learn more.

"I have mixed feelings. We need more jobs, but I'm aware of what's going on in the world," he said, referencing climate change. "I haven't made up my mind yet."

Carlos Smith, a tribal councilor from the Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation of Oregon and a member of the Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission, told the sympathetic crowd that, if approved, the oil terminal could directly affect his people's heritage.

"Our tribe has been fighting for our way of life since before the state of Oregon and the U.S. government," he said. "To see something like this oil terminal threaten recovering salmon populations ... would be a shame."

1,000 people attended the hearing throughout the day.

Oil for the terminal would largely come from the Bakken field in North Dakota, though the environmental review allows for other North American crude to be handled, including tar sands oil from Alberta.

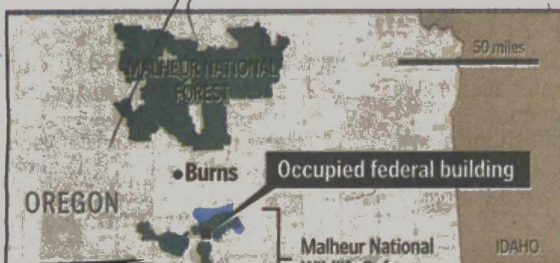
The government's recent lifting of a ban on oil exports opens the possibility that the oil could move to foreign markets. But Vancouver Energy has emphasized that the oil would be refined and consumed in the U.S. as it promotes the project's benefit to energy independence.

"The fundamentals haven't changed," Vancouver Energy General Manager Jared Larrabee said in an interview Monday. "We still

have the need for an outlet and demand on the West Coast."

Comments will be collected on the oil terminal through Jan. 22, including in person at the next Vancouver hearing and one in Spokane Valley on Jan. 14. Comments can also be submitted online at efsec.wa.gov or by mail to Energy Facility Site Evaluation Council, P.O. Box 43172, Olympia, WA 98504.

The evaluation council will likely finalize the Environmental Impact Statement later this year and make its recommendation. Gov. Inslee, who is not allowed to comment on the process while it is ongoing, will then make a decision to allow or deny the terminal.



## Occupiers

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son of Nevada rancher Cliven Bundy, who was involved in a high-profile 2014 standoff with the government over

from Portland on Saturday night. Roughly 20 people bundled in camouflage, ear muffs and cowboy hats are occupying the bleak, high desert of eastern Oregon.

As the takeover entered its third day, authorities had not moved in and had not shut off power to the refuge. Arizona

looked out over the snowy grounds from a watchtower.

Ammon Bundy offered few specifics about the group's plan to get the land turned over to local control.

Bundy said the group felt it had the support of the local community. But the county sheriff has told the activists

## Lottery

Results for Tuesday, Jan. 5  
Washington Daily Game:  
7-7-4  
Washington Keno: 1-5-8-19-21-28-30-34-47-48-49-50-52-57-60-61-62-68-75-80