

Oligarchy feeling a bit gassy

Friday was a great day. Not only was my daughter accepted into the University of Oregon but FERC denied the certificate of public convenience and necessity to the Pacific Connector Gas Pipeline. Because I was standing in the middle of McArthur Court on the U of O campus surrounded by anxious parents and giggling young adults I had to slip outside when I received the call from an affected landowner... the order was barely 20 minutes old! Without a pipeline, the commission reasoned, there is no purpose for a LNG terminal either and so they denied Jordan Cove as well.

Naturally, I was so excited that while I waited for the order to come up on one phone I fired off a bunch of texts on the other and then stood in the hallway reading. My joy soon turned to disappointment. Make no mistake, this is a momentous moment and will have the effect of deterring both the terminal and pipeline for the foreseeable future but as one activist put it, this project is "undead." The FERC denial was made without prejudice which means both companies, Veresen and Williams, can reapply and, in fact, both companies have declared their intention to demand a rehearing. That, however, is not what is so disappointing. After all the thousands of comments about the negative impacts upon waterways and forests and oysters and clams and birds and the very air we breathe the denial came down to one thing, the market. Hardly a surprise given the Final EIS but disheartening nonetheless that the damage caused by fracking and all the methane spewing into the air at both ends of the pipe and the impact on climate meant nothing. Without purchase contracts the company simply failed to meet the minimum standard necessary to justify the use of eminent domain. No pipe, no terminal.

Pro-gas boosters cannot even blame the environmental activists for the denial. The single most effective strategy employed by the opposition was that 90% of landowners refused to negotiate

an easement. If the company comes up with a buyer or two, (Veresen, in a fit of face saving, claims it will do just that), then nothing short of a tsunami or a countywide bill of rights for a sustainable energy future will stop it.

Yet, the local gassy oligarchy have once again hitched their pony to the wrong cart and tried to put all the county's eggs into one very unsustainable and rickety basket. Gosh, what will happen to the CEP? One would hope they might finally embrace the concept of sustainability, might encourage the discussions promoted by the SDAT Report but local history tells us this is highly unlikely. We have already heard the [booster bluster from Mark Wall](#). Nevertheless, with the oligarchy effectively neutered, the rest of us can start working toward sustainability before they get their mojo back and start strutting around about another coal terminal or pulp mill, or heaven forbid, Jordan Cove raises its ugly head again.

To that end, [Coos Commons Protection Council](#), [Coos Community Radio](#) along with area students and other local partners are holding what we believe is Coos County's first sustainability fair in April to celebrate Earth Day.