

# We need energy democracy in Coos County

President-elect Donald Trump and Secretary Hillary Clinton share some common views, not the least of which is their mutual support for the fossil-fuel industry. Emails obtained from the US State Department by [The Intercept](#) revealed how Clinton, who received [twice as much in contributions from oil](#) than Trump, during her tenure as Secretary of State worked to promote hydraulic fracturing, or "fracking", the highly controversial method of horizontal drilling for oil and gas, across the globe.

The whole point of mentioning this is that, in-light of [Jordan Cove's recent announcement to reapply](#) with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission and all the Sturm und Drang about the election results, opponents of the project would be in no better position to protect the environment and landowners even had Clinton won.

Unfortunately, affected landowners and environmental activists are no closer to permanently stopping Jordan Cove today than they were twelve years ago.

Trump and Clinton also agreed on something else. Along with their mutual admiration for fracking both concurred the communities affected should be able to say "no". [Clinton told reporters in Colorado during the campaign](#), "I have long been in favor of states and cities within states making up their own minds whether or not they want to permit fracking."

Trump claimed that ["voters should have a say"](#) on whether they want to prohibit fracking in their communities.

Trump's right. Democratizing local energy decisions, making up our "own minds" is at the heart of community rights efforts like Measure 6-162, the [Coos County Right to a Sustainable](#)

[Energy Future Ordinance](#) set for the May 2017 ballot. The ordinance will legalize our right to be a sustainable economy. An economy not subject to or dependent upon boards of directors of foreign corporations unable or unwilling to transition beyond 19<sup>th</sup> century energy technology.

Consider that an October 2016 [report](#) produced by global banking executives, the Group of Thirty or G30, notes that the rise of affordable renewable energy along with increasingly stringent climate policies is making the oil industry obsolete. Another reason not to leave our future decision making in the hands of oil and gas executives is that the G30 report also concludes the industry is out of touch and more than half of the \$2 trillion in long term debt incurred by the industry "...will never be repaid because the issuing firms comprehend neither how dramatically their industry has changed nor how these changes threaten to soon engulf them."

The late University of San Francisco business professor, Oren Harari once remarked, "The electric light did not come from the continuous improvement of candles."

The organization [Trade Unions for Energy Democracy \[TUED\]](#) states in a [report entitled Resist, Reclaim, Restructure: Unions and the Struggle for Energy Democracy](#) that the "business as usual" approach of the fossil-fuel industry does not benefit or protect energy workers and it "opposes the idea that the commodification of nature is key to solving the profound ecological crisis we face as a species. It regards the idea of putting a price on 'natural resources' in order to make capitalism green and sustainable as plainly false and deeply perverse."

The clash in North Dakota between the Dakota Access Pipeline developers and the Standing Rock Sioux has demonstrated one thing very clearly. Our current system of laws make saying NO to harmful, non-sustainable industrial practices that pollute air and water illegal and makes poisoning air and water

perfectly legal. Protecting our own communities and homes is a crime.

Militarized police deployed to protect corporate interests from unarmed civilians trying to protect the land and water for future generations. Appalled by the unchecked use of rubber bullets, teargas canisters, percussion grenades and the use of water cannons on the Sioux in subfreezing temperatures, 4,000 US veterans arrived to act as human shields. Combat veterans remarked that even in Iraq and Afghanistan there are "rules of engagement." Organized in just three weeks, the Veteran Stand, as they called themselves, may be the largest unarmed militia in US history.

It is no coincidence that on December 4, the day of the veterans arrival to the Standing Rock camp, the Army Corps of Engineers, on a Sunday afternoon, issued a temporary stay blocking the company from drilling under the Missouri River pending further environmental review.

Indifferent to the tribe's concerns, the company behind the pipeline, Energy Transfer Partners, vows to drill anyway confident that the new administration and the law is on its side. In fact the company declares it has played by all the rules. Admirable, unless the rules are already stacked heavily on your side.

Remember, that our history is rife with citizens defying unjust laws, committing acts of civil disobedience and pushing to amend the government or revoke their consent to be governed. Thank goodness they did or there might still be no abolition or suffrage or freedom of speech or due process in this "democracy."

TUED affirms what we in the community rights movement are fighting for across the country and here in Coos County.

*"An energy transition can only occur if there is a decisive shift in power towards workers, communities and the*

*public-energy democracy. A transfer of resources, capital and infrastructure from private hands to a democratically controlled public sector will need to occur in order to ensure that a truly sustainable energy system is developed in the decades ahead."*

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