

“A system cannot fail those it was never designed to protect”

One thing we learned from the recent election is Jordan Cove Energy Partners fears direct democracy. The No campaign that opposed Measure 6-162 to establish a community Bill of Rights spent almost \$50 per NO vote, most of it from the Canadian firm, to convince Coos County to vote against our best interests and in the interests of the company.

Nevertheless, the Yes on 6-162 campaign was an astonishing success. At a fraction of the cost four thousand Coos County residents said yes. They said “yes” to local decision making power over our energy. “Yes” to energy for Coos County, not Coos County being sold to a Canadian fossil fuel company. “Yes” to prohibiting eminent domain for corporate gain and to energy projects that sell-out our future for a thin promise of short-term financial gain.

And thanks, in no small part to Jordan Cove’s unprecedented spending the measure garnered international attention and demonstrated in vivid detail that corporations, even foreign corporations have privileges and governmental protections that American citizens and whole communities do not, not the least of which is the right to be the decision makers where we live.

Most chillingly the campaign illuminated just how inured society has become to the unfairness of our present system. Opponents claimed the measure would prompt expensive lawsuits

costing taxpayers money when in fact it would be the company bringing a lawsuit solely responsible for any costs.



In all the campaign noise generated by the corporate opposition, our community never really got the chance to consider the fundamental question of 6-162, which is should we have the right to stand up for ourselves and protect our air, water and land and private property from clear threats such as the pipeline and Jordan Cove?

We have a system today where obedience to centralized authority is necessary for projects like Jordan Cove to exist. Jordan Cove, the federal government, and even certain activist groups want us to accept that we simply have no control and therefore cannot do anything about changing the course of events. This sense of learned helplessness disguised as democracy is deeply embedded in our society.

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~W.E.B. Du Bois

There are some of us out there who have been working hard to get out from under the injustice of the system and exercised the important power of direct democracy. Like direct action, direct democracy is most often a path of last resort taken when all other avenues have been exhausted and our legislators and elected officials fail to protect our fundamental rights. Mayor Joe Benetti and Commissioner Melissa Cribbins didn't speak out for landowners threatened by eminent domain or feign even the slightest interest in what the people of Coos County may really want, instead they rallied to the defense of Jordan Cove hiding behind a system of law that already sides against the average citizen. That's partly why Measure 6-162 came to be.

Measure 6-162 may not be back in front of voters in Coos County again but the question of who decides what happens in our community, what the future of the place we call home looks like, will. That question may very well be about deciding whether Jordan Cove, the pipeline, and the use of eminent domain for corporate gain is something we here in Coos County want and will allow and what we are willing to do about it.

Jordan Cove Energy Cove Energy Partners wasn't just looking to buy a favorable ballot measure result, they were trying to send a clear message to everyone in the county and all the counties along the pipeline route not to bother trying to protect your private property. Thankfully, more challenges will face Jordan Cove not just here but along the entire length of the Pacific Connector Gas Pipeline.

The same corporate campaign group from Portland that was paid

to mislead Coos County voters ran a similar campaign against a similar measure to ban aerial spraying in Lincoln County. They employed the same scare tactics and generically non-specific claims about not being "well written" but despite the rhetoric, as of this writing the Yes campaign is ahead by a paper thin 27 votes. Score one for democracy.

The Yes on 6-162 campaign would have preferred a historic underdog victory like when heavily outnumbered American forces prevailed against the British at the Battle of Sullivan's Island in 1776 or a miracle like the 1980 US Olympic victory on ice against the highly favored Russian hockey team. Regrettably, this battle, if not fairly, most squarely goes to the Canadians. Canadians, really!