

# Jordan Cove wants us to trust them

Betsy Spomer claims in a recent op-ed to want to earn our trust through “vigorous public discussion” and to demonstrate that her company, Jordan Cove Energy Partners, is a “responsible corporate neighbor”. This is an incongruous statement from the CEO of a company that just a few short months ago spent almost \$700K, almost twenty times more than any local political campaign in Coos County history, specifically to thwart public discourse. Through the artfully named “Save Coos Jobs” campaign literature and media advertising the company even threatened Coos County with lawsuits if voters did not cast their ballots in the best interests of Jordan Cove.

Regardless of where you stood on community rights Measure 6-162, the Coos County Right to a Sustainable Energy Future Ordinance, the Canadian owned company’s interference in our local democracy are not those of a responsible corporate neighbor. Heck, we Americans cannot even buy their stock. There is nothing trustworthy about a foreign special interest pretending to be a local grassroots effort and funding a covert campaign riddled with provably false statements. False claims were made about imposing vehicle checkpoints or denying fuel to neighboring counties, even though the ordinance specifically protected existing applications of fossil-fuels.

The Save Coos Jobs campaign did this all the while omitting any reference to Jordan Cove or LNG or the Pacific Connector Gas Pipeline when the measure would have specifically prohibited the use of eminent domain solely for the company’s gain.

Of course, Jordan Cove did have locals willing to assist in its grassroots deception like Barry Winters and Coos Bay Mayor Joe Benetti claiming to be in-charge-of the campaign even

though it was run out of Portland by a company called Prospect PDX. By way of proof, Prospect PDX which was paid more than \$212K, ran a similar albeit unsuccessful campaign against a community rights measure in Lincoln County. That measure to ban aerial spraying included a non-violent direct-action enforcement provision in the event a corporate actor attempts to violate the will of the people. Prospect spun that provision into a legalization of vigilantism which, while false, also somehow made it into the campaign here despite there being no such clause in Measure 6-162. The campaign was even able to employ a local farmer to participate in an ad spreading this falsehood.

According to OreStar, no member of the local campaign committee contributed a cent. In fact, Benetti was paid \$433.53 by the campaign to hold the election night dinner at his restaurant.

There is no denying there will be some local profiteers, if only short term, should Jordan Cove be built. Pro-gas advocates may sincerely believe that tethering the community to 19th century energy technology and shouldering the health costs associated with burning fossil-fuels will bring long term benefits to the county despite all the empirical evidence to the contrary. This may explain, though not excuse why local politicians like county commissioners Bob Main and Melissa Cribbins and John Sweet continue to carry water for Jordan Cove and not only ignore but defend this assault on our local elections.

Spomer works in an industry that is only profitable thanks to \$5.3 trillion a year, a staggering 6.5% of global GDP, in taxpayer funded subsidies. According to a new study prepared by staff of the International Monetary Fund, not only do these fossil-fuel subsidies damage the environment they discourage investments in renewable energy and are an inefficient means of supporting low-income households.

The human health costs of fossil fuels are estimated at \$74.6 billion annually, yet the Save Coos Jobs campaign accused the measure backers of being “radical environmental extremists” for daring to want clean air and water.

Protection by the US military for overseas oil sources amounts to \$1 per gallon of what we pay at the pump.

Clearly, this is not a sustainable industry and it’s no wonder the company would rather place its fortunes in FERC, where it is virtually guaranteed a permit to pollute our air and waterways, than in the voters of Coos County.

Renewable energy is now competitive with and even cheaper than fossil fuels and jobs in the renewable sector are growing at a pace twelve times greater than the US economy.

Behind her deceptively placid smile, Spomer is asking us to put faith in her antiquated, non-sustainable, taxpayer subsidized business model and trust in a company that was willing to deceive county voters, trod all over our local democracy and wants to forcibly take land from unwilling Americans all to enrich Canadian shareholders.

If you want to help permanently stop this boondoggle and ban the pipeline send an email to [cooscommons@gmail.com](mailto:cooscommons@gmail.com)

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**“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



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.

“A System Cannot Fail Those It Was Never Designed To Protect”  
~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!