

# Coos County Right to a Sustainable Energy Future set for May 2017 ballot

There were some victories November 8, 2016. Two communities, [Highland Township, PA](#) and [Waterville, OH](#) each passed a bill of rights by overwhelming margins banning harmful development in their communities.

With a new president threatening to weaken already marginal environmental safeguards, now more than ever we must exercise our fundamental right to say NO to non-sustainable energy infrastructure. Yet, amidst all the sturm und drang media analysis as to how a racist, serial sexual predator, fascist, climate denier like Trump was elected and how to reinvent the democratic party from its own self-immolation most of it revolves around the same stuck in the box thinking of trying to solve the problem with the very same thinking that created it.

A few voices have stood out from the crowd like this from [John Schwarz of The Intercept](#).

*The people who run America have constructed a political system that's like a glitchy killer robot, one even they can't control anymore.*

*Working as designed it murders [African Americans](#) and [pregnant women](#) and [opioid addicts](#)...*

*If there's anything to learn from history, it's that elites don't dismantle their beloved killer robots on their own. Either regular people – including you reading this right now – will deactivate this one, or it will never happen at all. Not a single person knows exactly how to pull this off. But one thing's for sure: Trump's rise proves that whatever*

*it is we've been doing isn't working.*

The community rights movement began with this same realization, that what environmentalists are doing isn't working. In the 40 odd years since the enactment of NEPA and the formation of the EPA our environment has gotten steadily worse with 40% of our waterways barely sustaining life while emissions have already topped 400PPM.

Social justice advocates are also realizing the same thing. The wealth gap has also grown steadily, even under Obama and corporate privileges are protected by the government while communities rights, the very act of protecting clean air and water are criminalized. Nothing demonstrates this more starkly than the recent protests over the Dakota Access Pipeline.

Clearly, whatever it is we've been doing isn't working.

**Any system of government that becomes destructive of the rights of the people and their communities is not legitimate, lawful, or constitutional.**

Coos Commons Protection Council has qualified a citizen initiative, The Coos County Right to a Sustainable Energy Future Ordinance, for the May 2017 ballot. Coos along with Lincoln County are set to pass countywide bills of rights to protect citizens from industrial harm like aerial pesticide spraying and non-sustainable energy infrastructure.

### **Measure 6-162**

#### **Community Rights vs Corporate Privilege**

**What the Ordinance will do.**

The ordinance will secure the right of the people of Coos

County to be the decision makers about its energy future not corporations. The ordinance will protect the rights of people and ecosystems in Coos County from non-sustainable energy projects, including current corporate and government attempts to push through the pipeline and Jordan Cove LNG export terminal. It would not only prohibit the siting of such projects but also the use of eminent domain – the taking of private property – on behalf of oil and gas corporations.

### **What the Ordinance will NOT do.**

The Ordinance will not affect the transportation of fossil fuels intended for residential, commercial, or industrial use for on-site power, heat consumption and vehicle refueling.

The Ordinance will NOT establish a home rule charter and is NOT affiliated with any charter.

### **Where does the Ordinance get its authority?**

Its central authority is derived from the inherent and inalienable right of the people of Coos County to local, community self-government. It is a well-accepted, fundamental principle that all political power is inherent in the people, is exercised by them for their benefit, and is subject to their control. This right is secured by the American Declaration of Independence, the Oregon constitution, and the United States Constitution. Because the right is inherent and inalienable, no government can define, diminish, or otherwise control it. Therefore, the assertion of the rights, prohibitions, and enforcement provisions in the Coos County Sustainable Energy Future ordinance come from our right exercising such decision making power.

### **Why do we need this Ordinance?**

Coos County has experienced sustained and significant economic decline in recent decades due to ill-advised and non-sustainable development policies. In addition, we have

experienced firsthand the harmful effects of unchecked resource extraction and recognize that investments in non-sustainable energy systems like the LNG pipeline and export terminal will damage Coos County.

We also recognize the importance of healthy and thriving natural communities and ecosystems and that non-sustainable energy system projects would threaten those natural systems.

We must also confront the truth that our current system of municipal governance fails to recognize the self-governing authority of the people of Coos County because corporations may assert their “rights” to override our laws. Our local government also operates on the assumption that corporate rights trump those of the people, can be preempted by state or federal legislators and agencies, and are banned from adopting laws, which have not been authorized by the state.

This means that our current municipal system of governance is illegitimate and that we are adopting this Ordinance to create a new system of municipal governance which recognizes our self-governing authority and which secures and protects our rights to a sustainable energy future.

Already, the pro-gas crowd have started polling county citizens to determine just how much they will have to spend to defeat this measure. Contribute to this campaign by following this [link](#) or you can donate via the Facebook page [here](#)

### **Coos County Sustainable Energy Future Community Bill of Rights**

**Right to a Sustainable Energy Future.** All residents in Coos County possess a right to a sustainable energy future, and the people of Coos County have the right to adopt laws and policies to secure that right. That right shall include the authority to require the development, production, and use of sustainable energy.

**Right to Scenic and Recreational Preservation.** All residents

of Coos County possess a right to the preservation and enhancement of the scenic, historic and aesthetic values of the County, including unspoiled vistas and outdoor recreational opportunities, thereby improving the area's appeal to tourists and future residents.

That right shall include the right of the residents of the County to be free from activities, which threaten scenic, historic, and aesthetic values as related to the construction, siting, or operation of non-sustainable energy systems.

**Rights of Natural Communities and Ecosystems to Thrive.**

Natural communities and ecosystems within Coos County, including but not limited to, forests, rivers, streams, wetlands, aquifers, near shore habitats, and intertidal zones possess the right to exist, flourish, and naturally evolve unaffected by the construction, siting, or operation of non-sustainable energy systems.

**Governmental Legitimacy.** All governments owe their existence to the people of the community that those governments serve, and governments exist to secure and protect the rights of the people and those communities. Any system of government that becomes destructive of those ends is not legitimate, lawful, or constitutional.

**Right to Local, Community Self-Government.** The people of Coos County possess both a collective and individual right to self-government in their community, a right to a system of government that embodies that right, and the right to a system of government that protects and secures their human, civil, and collective rights.

**Right to Assert the Right to Self-Government.** The people of Coos County possess the right to use their local government to make law, and the making and enforcement of law by the people through a municipal corporation or any other institution shall not eliminate, limit, or reduce their sovereign right to

local, community self-government.

**Rights are Self Executing.** All rights delineated and secured by this ordinance are inherent, fundamental, and unalienable, and shall be self-executing and enforceable against both private and public actors.

Read the initiative in full [here](#)

You can contribute to this campaign by following this [link](#) or you can donate via the CCPC Facebook page [here](#)