

# ...New dry dock coming to Portland shipyard

## Labor gets seat on Portland's utility reform task force

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Company in Jiangsu Province, China. Vigor spokesperson Brian Mannion

said it will be brought up the Columbia River in three parts some time in late summer 2014 and assembled where the former Dry Dock 4 was.

There's a 661-foot dry dock there now, which will have to be moved to another location, either in Portland or elsewhere. Mannion said the new dry

dock will be in operation by the end of this year, at which point it will be the largest floating dry dock in the United States.

"This represents the resurgence of the maritime industry in Portland," Mannion said.

Vigor has nine dry docks currently, including three in Portland. The company, led by owner and CEO Frank Foti, has annual revenues of around \$500 million, and is confident enough about its ability to win contracts for big ships that it was willing to make the investment in the new dry dock, Mannion said. Most of the business will be in repair contracts, but the dry dock could be used to launch newly fabricated ships also.

The biggest job impacts will be on members of the Boilermakers and other unions affiliated with the Portland Metal Trades Council. The new dry dock will also be large enough that Vigor could work on cruise ships, which would open up job possibilities for commercial painting, glazing, floor-covering, and drywall. One local union leader said it could add over 400 jobs to the shipyard. The company isn't announcing any jobs estimates thus far.

Shipbuilding and repair is a cyclical business, and Vigor's workforce can fluctuate by as many as 500 people in a year, Mannion said.

Oregon AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Barbara Byrd has been appointed as the labor voice on the City of Portland's new blue ribbon commission on utility oversight.

The 12-member panel was set up to look at potential reforms of Portland's water and sewer bureaus, and report back to Portland City Council in November. Its chair is former U.S. attorney Dwight Holton, who was a candidate for attorney general in 2012.

Byrd says she has no special expertise on utility issues, but she'll make sure the commission considers the perspective of workers in those bureaus.

Unions, led by AFSCME, were the biggest contributors to the campaign to defeat a May 2014 citywide ballot measure that would have put a new independent board in charge of the City's water and sewer system. The measure's backers criticized the City's current leadership for rate increases, inappropriate expenditures, and lack of accountability and budget transparency. The task of the blue ribbon commission is to come up with reforms that could address those concerns.

All of the commission's meetings will be open to the public. The first meeting will be July 15 from 4 to 6 p.m. in the Lovejoy Room of Portland City Hall, 1221 SW 4th Ave.



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