



An artist's rendering of the proposed Jordan Cove liquefied natural gas terminal in Coos Bay.

PHOTO COURTESY OF JORDAN COVE LNG



PHOTO COURTESY OF CASCADIA WILDLANDS

'A never-ending nightmare'

The Jordan Cove liquefied natural gas pipeline is back on the table in Coos Bay, and concerned property owners are pushing back

BY STEPHEN QUIRKE
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In the whirlwind of deregulation and corporate jubilation surrounding President Donald Trump, Canada-based Veresen Inc. hopes to find some new wind in its sails.

Veresen is the money behind the long-running effort to export liquefied natural gas (LNG) from the coast of Southern Oregon in Coos Bay. Its plans were dealt a serious blow last March when the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission denied key permits, marking the first time the agency has ever denied permits for LNG. In December, the agency declined to reconsider its decision, and shortly after, Veresen withdrew its proposal for the South Dunes power plant, which had been proposed to liquefy and cool gas for storage and shipment after passing through the proposed Pacific Connector Pipeline.

Now, with a president who is warm to the fossil fuel industry, the company says it's still in the game.

"I think with a little help from the White House, we'll be able to get there," CEO Don Althoff said after a March 10 meeting with White House economic adviser Gary Cohn.

And residents of Coos County will be looking at an initiative to push back.

In May, Coos County voters will consider a first-of-its-kind law that would ban the export of liquefied natural gas from the county by prohibiting fossil fuel transportation that is not intended for local use. This follows dozens of communities that have passed local laws aimed to protect their water from fracking, and it could make Coos County the first to prevent such

fracked gas from leaving North America for sale on a foreign market.

In a Feb. 10 news release, Jordan Cove LNG said it pre-filed for a new application with FERC. Informational open houses will be held March 21 through 24.

Two major problems highlighted in FERC's March 2016 rejection were the lack of confirmed LNG buyers and unclear access to the pipeline's right of way in the 230 miles between Malin and Coos Bay. In fact, much of this right of way is being occupied by property owners who have no interest in a pipeline negotiation. According to the FERC letter, the company obtained only 4.7 percent of the right-of-way easement and 2.8 percent of the total construction easement. Meanwhile, eminent domain could be used on 630 landowners to make way for the Pacific Connector Pipeline. Fifty-four of those landowners actively intervened in the FERC process to object to the pipeline. At a Feb. 24 town hall in Ashland, U.S. Sen. Ron Wyden publicly opposed the use of eminent domain for the pipeline and called for a ban on both its use and the threat of its use for the Pacific Connector Pipeline.

"The first we heard of it was when we found flagging on our property," said Deb Evans, a property owner in Klamath County. "The more research we did, the more crazy the project seemed."

After refusing an offer to sell an easement to the company, Evans began

working with other landowners to hike the path of the pipeline and document the effects it would have on their property and the environment.

"Part of our success is just connecting with other landowners and asking them what they wanted," Evans said. "Hike the Pipe really helped us do that. To do this day,

we know hundreds of landowners throughout the pipeline route."

One of the people Evans met was Stacy McLoughlin, a landowner in Klamath County who had reforested 357 acres of logged-over land that had been littered with old electronics and appliances. What bothers McLoughlin most is the idea of heavy construction and an

explosive pipeline running through 400 rivers and streams between Maupin and Coos Bay.

They can't mitigate that, she said. "You cannot go into that South Umpqua River and do horizontal drilling, drilling under it, or the Rogue River, and say you're not going to impact that. They don't even mitigate where the impacts happen – they mitigate other places. How does it help me or my community to have the negative impacts to the South Umpqua River mitigated at the South Dunes golf course in Bandon? It doesn't benefit the endangered species or our community. They'll be leaving Southern Oregon an environmental crime scene."

Concern from property owners has also been echoed by the Klamath Tribes, which

"Southern Oregonians have demonstrated, year after year, that we don't want this pipeline and export terminal."

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