

TAR SANDS CAMPAIGN IN OREGON

The heavy haul has inexorably been moving massive loads of tar sands equipment up the Columbia River and through wild and scenic corridors to the final destination in Canada where the machines will be used to extract oil from the earth using methods that opponents say are toxic and emit climate-changing greenhouse gases. Native tribes, fishermen and conservationists say the hauls — trucks and loads with combined weight up to half a million pounds — and modifications to the roads they travel could hurt the Northwest's fragile salmon runs. Groups in Oregon have begun to speak up.

Much of the protest has come from groups directly affected by the megaloads — people along the route, or who live in the Midwest where the associated Keystone XL Pipeline will run, bringing the crude tar sands oil from Canada to refineries in the U.S. But Michael O'Leary of the National Wildlife Federation's Tar-free Oregon campaign says the dirty fossil fuel and climate change issue affects everyone. "On the demand side, we are all part of the consumptive behaviors," he says.

O'Leary says Tar-Free Oregon will begin work asking cities, counties and the state to consider contracting for fuel that is tar sands-free and thus has a lower impact on the climate. "One of the largest consumers of gasoline is the local government," O'Leary says, citing uses from the police to county motor pools.

While the group has had conversations with local governments, such as the city of Eugene, no agreements have been made. Eugene Mayor Kitty Piercy was one of 25 mayors who sent a letter to Secretary of State Hillary Clinton in late March expressing concern over the Keystone pipeline and asking the State Department to look at how the expansion of high-carbon tar sands imports can undermine municipal clean energy initiatives.

O'Leary says Tar-Free Oregon would not ask governments to ban Canadian oil, just not buy tar sands-produced oil. What if, he asks, the gas pump didn't just have an octane rating but a climate impact rating? He says, "10 percent of Oregon's fuel is tar-sourced."

Eugene-based Indigenous People for Sustainable Lifestyles has begun to take action against the route to the tar sands here in Oregon. Native American activists Shayleen Macy and Kayla Godowa-Tufti, both of the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs, and Delia Sanchez of the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde, organized an event in Portland's Kelley Point Park, along the Columbia on March 20 that they say was both spiritual and a protest.

The group says they do not approve of using the Columbia River, where the Warm Springs tribe has treaty rights to fish for salmon, as a route to destroy the boreal forests of Canada and facilitate destruction of the earth.

IPSL is planning another event, a salmon bake at Kelley Point Park on April 23, according to Macy and Sanchez. Sanchez says the group is also coordinating with Northwest tribal "canoe families" as part of the event. Canoe families have been reviving the Northwest native canoe culture and Sanchez says take journeys by canoe as long as 900 miles.

The group meets Tuesdays from 4 to 6 pm at the University of Oregon's Many Nations Longhouse. For more information contact Macy at plentycoo@yahoo.com — *Camilla Mortensen*



Activists and tribal members gather at Kelley Point Park

PHOTO: TAR-FREE OREGON

NEWS Briefs

LNG PIPELINES ONE DOWN ONE FLIPPING?

Liquefied natural gas advocates have called those opposed to massive gas pipeline projects in Oregon "NIMBYs" (Not In My Backyard) over their objections to gas companies using eminent domain to take portions of their land for projects such as the Pacific Connector and the Palomar Pipeline. But opponents say the issue isn't just where the pipelines would go, but the repercussions for everything from the environment to prices for electricity and gas customers.

LNG is natural gas that has been cooled to a liquid for shipping. Once transformed back to a gas, it is shipped through large pipelines, similar to the one that exploded and killed eight people in September 2010 in San Bruno, Calif. Oregonians have been fighting several proposed LNG import terminals. One, Bradwood Landing, has gone under, and its associated pipeline, the Palomar Pipeline, withdrew its permit application last week.

Olivia Schmidt, community organizer for BARK, says despite Palomar Gas Transmission LLC's claims its pipeline was not dependent on an LNG terminal, its decision to withdraw both halves of its proposed pipeline indicate otherwise. The eastern half of the pipeline would have gone through the Mt. Hood National Forest, cutting a 50-foot wide swath through the forest and cutting through the Clackamas River, she says.

Schmidt says Palomar violates the laws that protect wild and scenic rivers and old growth, and it could damage critical habitat for salmon and steelhead.

While celebrating, Schmidt says the fight is not over yet. "When and if they came back we're here to stop them again," she says. Palomar has indicated it intends to file another application in the future. She says what has stopped the LNG companies has "really just been resistance from the public, which has slowed this project down enough to reconsider their investment."

She points out that even as the diverse coalition of environmentalists, landowners and others celebrate Palomar's current defeat, Oregon LNG's proposed terminal in Astoria is still on the table as is Jordan Cove and the Pacific Connector pipeline in Coos Bay.

Monica Vaughan, grassroots coordinator for Klamath-Siskiyou Wildlands Center, says LNG opponents' fears that the proposed Oregon terminals would not just import LNG but export the fossil fuel were realized when Bob

Braddock, project manager for Jordan Cove, told the energy newsletter "Platts LNG Daily" that his company had mulled over inquiries about using the facility to convert domestic gas to LNG for export. Braddock has since backpedaled on his comment.

Under section 7(h) of the Natural Gas Act, as an import terminal, Jordan Cove's Pacific Connector legally qualifies to use eminent domain to cross properties as the pipeline would be for the public's benefit. As an export terminal it would not qualify because the gas would not be for "public convenience and necessity."

Vaughan says, "For the last couple years we've really anticipated that the project would be flipped to export because that's what would make economic sense." She says the proposed Pacific Connector pipeline to Malin, OR, would link to the Ruby Pipeline and tap into Wyoming's natural gas supplies.

Exporting natural gas would cause prices for the fuel and electricity to rise in the U.S. Vaughan says, citing the Industrial Energy Consumers of America, which recently came out against an LNG export proposal in Louisiana.

— *Camilla Mortensen*

WILLAMETTE BIKE LANES?

Cyclists have appealed to the Eugene City Council to include bike lanes in a planned repaving project on south Willamette Street.

The local GEARs bicycle group posted an action alert on its website March 11. The group said they'd learned of a city re-paving project on Willamette from 29th to 32nd avenues that did not include bike lanes contrary to the TransPlan passed by local elected officials. "This is a serious error, especially given the fact that the Willamette and 29th area was highlighted at the last Advocacy Committee meeting as a top problem spot for biking."

The group called for people to write to the council urging them to pull the three block section of Willamette from the larger 17-block re-paving project so that the re-paving can be re-planned to include bike lanes.

Six citizens emailed councilors urging the elected officials to include the already planned bike lanes. "Our family relies on bicycle transport on a daily basis, including doing our shopping at the Woodfield Station area. We often take the risky ride along Willamette Street, but when using our bike trailers, sometimes we are forced to take a long detour to avoid the stretch of Willamette Street between 29th and 32nd," wrote Lynn Cody.

Richie Weinman wrote that he lives near Willamette and that not including the bike lanes "seems to be inconsistent with city policy. If you look at a map, you will see that there aren't very satisfactory alternatives to Willamette Street in that area for bike riders."

"This violation of the city's own policy needs to be addressed," wrote Carin Wise of not including the bike lanes called for in TransPlan.