

WYDEN SUPPORTS COOS BAY LNG PROJECT DESPITE ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARDS

Step aside, Keystone XL pipeline: Oregon is advancing toward acquiring a new fossil fuel pipeline of its own, after the Jordan Cove liquefied natural gas (LNG) project in Coos Bay received a conditional export license from the U.S. Department of Energy on March 24.

Not everyone is eager to support this project, but Sen. Ron Wyden jumped into the fray with a recorded statement in which he said, "I urged DOE to consider this application without delay, and I am pleased the department decided that Jordan Cove deserves to move forward. Priority one for me has always been ensuring American jobs and employers see the full benefits of the natural gas renaissance."

Environmental advocates say it's not that simple. The Jordan Cove LNG project is slated for the north spit of lower Coos Bay, and if fully approved, it will export natural gas from a 235-mile-long pipeline traversing across private and publicly owned lands in Southern Oregon.

"I'm concerned that the senator is taking a superficial look at the supposed benefits of this project," says Susan Jane Brown, a staff attorney for Western Environmental Law Center. "For the rest of us in Oregon, we're taking a harder look at the environmental and social impacts."

Brown says the environmental costs are "numerous and longwinded," starting with the hazards associated with dredging the waters of Coos Bay and drilling under rivers.

"The scale of this project is massive," says Forrest English, program director of Rogue Riverkeeper. "We're talking about a 235-mile pipeline crossing almost 400 streams and rivers to export over 1 billion cubic feet of gas per day. That's a scale close to unprecedented in Oregon's history."

English says that drilling under rivers and through habitat can result in aquatic wildlife habitat loss, increased sedimentation disturbance and invasive species transmission. Additionally, the location of the terminal is problematic. "We're putting highly explosive gas where elementary schools are within the blast zone in a seismically active sand spit," he says. "Public safety is definitely part of this."

The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) is due to produce a draft of an environmental impact statement in the next few months. English says that other federal and state agencies such as the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality and the National Marine Fisheries Service

might provide more protective reviews later on, and the state has the final say in moving the project forward.

"We hope the state takes a hard line and protects Oregonians and the environment we depend on," English says.

—Amy Schneider

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—FORREST ENGLISH, ROGUE RIVERKEEPER.

>>> BIZ BEAT CONTINUED FROM P. 6

Eugene Weekly's free **Spring Wellness Summit** will be from noon to 6 pm Saturday, March 29, at Cozmic, 199 W. 8th Ave., sponsored by International Fitness and 20 other local businesses and health care providers. Bev Smith of Kidsports will be among the speakers and the event features fencing and martial arts demonstrations, organic makeup makeovers, group yoga, live music and much more. For more information, call 484-0519 or see our special pull-out section this week.

The **Oregon Medical Marijuana Business Conference** that sold out in Ashland will be repeated on a larger scale from 10 am to 5 pm Sunday and Monday, March 30-31, at the Hilton in Eugene. Medical marijuana business owners and political leaders from across Oregon and the West Coast will be there, as well as an exhibit hall for cannabis-related industries, says organizer Alex Rogers. Speakers include Troy Dayton, Don Duncan, Aaron Smith, Oregon Sen. Floyd Prozanski, Anthony Johnson and attorney Amy Margolis. Registration is \$349. See ommbc.com.

The 15th annual **That's My Farmer!** celebration will be from 6 to 8 pm Tuesday, April 1, at First United Methodist Church, 13th and Olive. Representatives of a dozen local farms will be on hand to talk about Community Supported Agriculture and raise money to subsidize the cost of CSA boxes for low-income families. Sliding-scale donation of \$5 to \$15 suggested.

CORRECTIONS/CLARIFICATIONS

In a March 20 story on the cougars that were trapped and killed near Hendricks Park, EW quoted Brooks Fahy of Predator Defense as saying the cougar could have been relocated to a remote part of Eugene. Fahy says actually rather than relocate cougars, which can separate family members and cause other unperceived problems, the best strategy is to leave the wildlife alone and ask people to change their behavior and take responsibility to protect their property.

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