

# Port worries about dangerous mix of log trucks, cars, people

By EDWARD STRATTON  
The Daily Astorian

Note to people accessing the westernmost portion of the Astoria Riverwalk: Avoid log trucks.

Port of Astoria Commissioner Stephen Fulton requested a discussion item Tuesday on access to the parking lot at the base of Pier 3 that provides access to the Astoria Riverwalk.

Fulton and Commissioner Bill Hunsinger relayed their concerns of seeing people, cars and log trucks dangerously close to each other on the road cutting off from Gateway Avenue, going west past Englund Marine & Industrial Supply, the boatyard and the entrance to the log yard before reaching the parking lot.

Log trucks regularly come down the road to drop off loads at the Pier 3 yard for debarking, and to take loads of debarked logs to Pier 1.

"The only thing to do is shut the road down and tell them to use the pedestrian path," Port Commissioner Bill Hunsinger said about access on Industry Street.

The Astoria Riverwalk runs along Industry Street, where users can park and take the trail to the western edge of Pier 3, which offers sweeping views of the Columbia River and Youngs Bay.

The Port periodically shut access down earlier this year, when Astoria Forest Products was storing logs in the lot behind the Best Western Lincoln Inn while loading ships back to back. Executive Director Jim Knight said he received calls within days from Business Oregon Ports Manager Dave Harlan saying the Port is in violation of the agreement that brought Englund Marine to the Port in the mid-2000s.

"We need to ask the state

**'The only thing to do is shut the road down and tell them to use the pedestrian path.'**

— Bill Hunsinger  
Port commissioner

for relief, because of the safety issues," Knight said.

He added there might be a compromise in closing access to the parking lot during business hours and opening it afterward.

The Astoria Riverwalk previously ended in the west at the former Red Lion Inn, before a \$1.2 million pedestrian path project extended it along the southern edge of the Port's central waterfront and around Pier 3.

The Oregon Department of Transportation provided a \$732,000 grant for the

10-space parking lot at the base of Pier 3.

"Dave Harlan has never been a friend of the Port of Astoria," Hunsinger said, adding that part of the agreement for the trail extension was that a higher and better use would prevail over access to the parking lot.

If Harlan or someone else wants to complain about access to the parking lot, Hunsinger said, they should come see the dangerous interaction between heavy equipment, cars and pedestrians.

When Astoria Forest

Products acquired Westlund Log Handlers' operations, it installed a debarker and created a log yard on Pier 3. The yard has chafed users of the Pier 3 boatyard, nearby businesses and people accessing the Astoria Riverwalk parking lot.

Commission Chairman John Raichl said there should at least be warnings along the road at the base of Pier 3 telling people they proceed at their own risk.

Commissioners said they still notice log trucks going through the Pier 3 boatyard to the log yard, even though Port staff said the practice would stop.

"I think a fence would be a good idea," Hunsinger said about dividing the boatyard and log yard, adding the Port could bring the issue up at a work session Aug. 4.

In other news:

• For the first time in six to seven years, Operations Man-

ager Matt McGrath said, the Port has caught its leases up with consumer price indexes, which accounts for increased costs in purchasing. Updating the leases, he said, generates an additional \$82,000 annually.

• McGrath unveiled the Port's redesigned website, which Knight said will go live Monday. It includes an incorporated calendar of events, online copies of the Port Commission's information packets, time lapse videos of the Port's operations and compatibility with smartphones and tablets.

• Fulton and Commissioner Bob Mushen sparred over their possible assignment to attend Columbia River Estuary Study Taskforce meetings. The group, which includes a council of governments including the Port, focuses on environmental planning and habitat restoration for fish and wildlife.

# New labor coalition pushes for \$13.50 minimum wage

By PETER WONG  
Capital Bureau

SALEM — A new coalition, backed by Oregon's largest labor federation, will press lawmakers next year to raise the state minimum wage to \$13.50 per hour — or it will press ahead with its own ballot measure.

"The bottom line is that something is going to happen in 2016," said Tom Chamberlain, president of the Oregon AFL-CIO, in a conference call to reporters Wednesday.

The Raise the Wage coalition is taking a different political tack than another group, 15 Now Oregon, which is nearing the start of gathering petition signatures to qualify its own \$15 statewide minimum wage for the 2016 ballot.

Chamberlain said "the first preference" of the Raise the Wage coalition is to give one more chance to lawmakers, who heard several bills to increase the minimum wage but did not advance any of them in this year's session.

Although lawmakers passed other bills — a requirement for paid sick leave, a state-sponsored plan for retirement savings, a ban on criminal-history inquiries on initial job applications — Chamberlain described inaction on the minimum wage "the one glaring exception."

Lawmakers will meet for a 35-day session starting in February.

House Speaker Tina Kotek, D-Portland, has laid out a plan to raise the minimum wage to \$13 in stages by 2018 and to allow cities and counties to raise it more. Although it did not advance past the House Rules Committee, Kotek said she plans to press ahead next year.

Unlike the pending ballot measure for a \$15 minimum, the proposal advocated by the Raise the Wage coalition also would allow cities and counties to set higher levels beyond \$13.50.

The coalition released a report, prepared by the union-funded Our Oregon, that said a \$13.50 mini-

**'I am talking about earning enough money at one job to pay my bills and make sure my son has the things he needs.'**

— Cynthia Munoz  
elementary school aide

wage is good for business.

"My employees are my most important asset, and it makes good business sense to take care of them," said Field, co-owner of Paperjam Press in northeast Portland. "Raising the minimum wage is a smart business decision."

Although the 15 Now Oregon group and the Raise the Wage coalition differ in their priorities, there is crossover support. Two of the chief petitioners for the \$15 minimum wage are from the Oregon farmworkers union known as PCUN and Jobs with Justice — both organizations represented in the Raise the Wage coalition.

The 15 Now Oregon group has filed 1,808 validated signatures, more than the 1,000 required to obtain an official summary from the attorney general known as a ballot title. Once a ballot title is certified — it can be challenged in the state Supreme Court — sponsors can collect the rest of the 88,184 signatures required to qualify the measure for the November 2016 ballot.

Andrea Miller, executive director of Causa, Oregon's immigrant-rights group, said the Raise the Wage coalition will have to set in motion the process for its own ballot measure this fall, ahead of the 2016 session.

Unlike the 2015 session, when individual organizations had multiple priorities, Miller said raising the minimum wage will be a focal point in 2016.

"Our job as a coalition is to mobilize constituents and community members across the state to tell their legislators this needs to be at the top of their ticket in 2016," she said.

The Capital Bureau is a collaboration between EO Media Group and Pamplin Media Group.

mum wage would be adequate in most rural counties to support a single adult with a preschool-age child. But in the three metropolitan Portland counties, the report said that level would have to be around \$22 per hour.

To Cynthia Munoz of Portland, who earns less than \$13 per hour as an elementary school aide in Woodburn, a raise would allow her to better support herself and her 10-year-old son.

"It's not about a vacation, and it's not about a night on the town," Munoz said. "I am talking about earning enough money at one job to pay my bills and make sure my son has the things he needs."

Opposition is expected from business groups, which note that Oregon's current minimum wage at \$9.25 is the nation's second highest statewide rate behind Washington's \$9.47.

They also oppose lifting the ban on independent action by local governments. D.J. Vogt, speaking for the Oregon Business Association, said that proposal is a "nonstarter."

But Deborah Field, who sits on the board of the Main Street Alliance of Oregon, said an increase in the minimum



Daniella Beccaria/Seattle Post-Intelligencer

In this April photo, with the Olympic Mountains in the background, a small boat crosses in front of an oil drilling rig as it arrives in Port Angeles, Wash., aboard a transport ship after traveling across the Pacific.

# Shell gets permits for limited oil drilling in Arctic waters

By KEVIN FREKING  
and DAN JOLING  
Associated Press

ANCHORAGE — The Obama administration has given Royal Dutch Shell PLC approval to begin limited exploratory oil drilling off Alaska's northwest coast.

The two permits issued Wednesday clear the way for drilling in Chukchi Sea, but with conditions.

Shell can only drill the top sections of wells because the company doesn't have critical emergency response equipment on site to cap a well in case of a leak. That equipment is aboard a ship headed to Portland for repairs.

The Interior Department's Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement said in a statement that Shell could submit an amended application for deeper drilling when

the capping stack can be deployed within 24 hours.

"Without question, activities conducted offshore Alaska must be held to the highest safety, environmental protection and emergency response standards," said the bureau's director, Brian Salerno.

The department had given a conditional OK to Shell's drilling plan in May, pending the company's ability to obtain all necessary permits from state and federal agencies.

Some environmental groups worry the Arctic's remoteness and rugged conditions will hamper cleanup efforts in the event of a spill, risking devastation of a fragile ecosystem.

Cindy Shogan, executive director of the Alaska Wilderness League, called it the wrong choice.

"This decision puts the fate of the fragile Arctic Ocean, and our climate future, in the hands of Shell Oil," she said

in a statement.

Proponents say drilling can be conducted safely with existing technologies and that future production decades from now will help sustain the country's energy needs and limit reliance on imports.

Shell spokeswoman Kelly op de Weegh said by email that receipt of the drilling permits signals the end of the permitting process, and drilling will begin when the area is clear of sea ice.

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