



Joshua Bessex/The Daily Astorian

People listen during the Oregon LNG permit public hearing at the Warrenton Community Center Wednesday.

LNG: 'What part of 'no' don't you understand?'

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'Prime site'
Warrenton Planning Director Skip Urling recommended that Kearns approve Oregon LNG's applications, but with conditions attached. For example, the company must take measures to mitigate the project's impact on traffic flow and public infrastructure.

A series of consultants for Oregon LNG testified to the company's efforts to minimize the impact on traffic, public works, wetlands and fishing operations — and to shore up, with state-of-the-art geotechnical and design methods, the seismic stability of the LNG tanks and facilities.

This project, which has been refined in response to feedback from local, state and federal agencies, "has been scrutinized probably more than any project you've seen," said Mike Connors, the Portland attorney representing Oregon LNG.

He said the city decided a decade ago to amend its comprehensive plan and rezone the land to allow for the type of industrial development the company is proposing.

"For decades, this particular site has been identified as a prime site for a heavy, marine industrial use, and the city has made attempts to try to entice or encourage development," he said, adding that "the question



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Daniel Kearns, a Portland land use attorney, speaks during an Oregon LNG permit public hearing at the Warrenton Community Center Wednesday.

of whether this type of use is appropriate in this particular location has already been determined."

However, Lauren Goldberg, the staff attorney for Columbia Riverkeeper — a Hood River-based environmental group that opposes the LNG project — argued that the city's decision to designate the area for industrial development "does not predetermine that an industrial development of this magnitude is appropriate."

Despite Urling's recom-

mendation to approve the pipeline and terminal permits, Goldberg said the LNG project violates multiple provisions in the city code, including the criterion involving public benefit.

She quoted the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency as stating the project will not provide the kind of economic benefit that the applicant and local governments anticipate; instead, the project will contribute to the further degradation of the Columbia River estuary while changing or

eliminating wildlife habitats.

In addition, she reminded Kearns that earlier this week a federal judge in Portland upheld a magistrate's findings

that Oregon LNG's challenge to a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers easement on the proposed site arose only after the statute of limitations had run out. The ruling underlined the fact that part of the site is, at the moment, unavailable to the company.

Yes and no

The LNG supporters may have been outnumbered, but their message was consistent. Again and again, they focused on the need for family-wage jobs in Warrenton; some even wore buttons reading "LNG = JOBS." The company has promised that the three- to four-year construction period would provide thousands of new jobs and deliver about 150 permanent jobs.

"Jobs here are hard to find," Dick Hellberg, a former Warrenton city commissioner, said. "Without jobs for people, we're going to continue to give food to the food bank without solving the problem," he said. "And we're not going to have

any young people that can stay here."

But Georgia Marincovich, an LNG opponent from Astoria, saw the jobs issue from a different angle. "They say we don't care about jobs," she said. "We care about jobs — and if you ruin the environment, you don't have any jobs for anybody."

"I think we all want the same thing. We want a good living environment. We want a place we can enjoy and that we can be proud of," said Lisa Lamping, an LNG supporter and former Warrenton city commissioner. "I think we can coexist with this (LNG project) if it's done right."

Carol Lucas, of Gearhart, expressed the impatience and incredulity of LNG opponents who have fought against LNG entering the community since 2004: "Why are we here after so many years?"

"We've said 'no,' and we've said 'no,' and we've said 'no,'" Lucas said. "It's the old saying: What part of 'no' don't you understand?"

Lease: Lommasson plans to keep the building's businesses the same

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The Red Building includes the Bridgewater Bistro, offices and The Loft at the Red Building, an event space upstairs. At the last meeting, Lommasson said he plans to keep the businesses the same.

In 2004, partners Ryan Davis and Helligso, working under Union Fish Properties, bought the Red Building, the last structure from the Union

Fishermen's Cooperative Packing Co., from the Port of Astoria for \$120,000. They planned to spend \$1.7 million fixing it up.

At an Astoria Development Commission meeting in 2010, city councilors voted to give Union Fish Properties a \$350,000 loan to help with first-floor renovations and a \$325,000 grant to help write down previous loans. Then-Community Develop-

ment Director Brett Estes said at the time that the urban renewal district had been largely created to establish a conference center.

Last month, the Astoria Development Commission agreed to extend the loan until February. In anticipation of a possible sale, the commission later agreed to transfer the loan to Cary and Helligso, instead of Union Fish, and further extend the due date.



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