

Trade deal could widen LNG market and increase exports

Department of Energy would automatically OK partner export deals

By ERICK BENGEL
The Daily Astorian

The Trans-Pacific Partnership, a proposed trade deal among the United States and 11 other Pacific

Rim countries, could widen the international market for liquefied natural gas by legally obliging the U.S. Department of Energy to automatically approve all applications to export LNG to partner countries.

If the controversial agreement — whose early text was released last week — goes forward, companies looking to ship LNG to, for example, Japan, the world's No. 1 LNG importer, would have their export applications granted without the energy department reviewing, modifying or delaying them. The result could be greater demand for LNG and more LNG exports.

All natural gas exporters need the approval of the energy department to sell to foreign buyers.

Last year, the department granted Oregon LNG, an energy company seeking to build an LNG terminal and pipeline on Warrenton's Skipanon Peninsula, a conditional license to export LNG to countries without a free trade agreement.

When foreign buyers do not

have a free trade agreement with the U.S., the energy department, in theory, must conduct a thorough public analysis to determine whether the gas exports are consistent with the public interest before granting a license, according to the U.S. Natural Gas Act.

But when the foreign buyer is part of a bilateral or a multilateral free trade agreement with the U.S. that — like the Trans-Pacific

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Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife
This remote camera photo taken in 2014 shows wolf OR-7 on the Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest in southwest Oregon. The Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission voted Monday to remove wolves from the state's endangered species list.

Oregon removes wolves from the list

Contentious move takes away their endangered status

By ERIC MORTENSON
Capital Bureau

SALEM — After nearly 11 hours of emotional testimony, back and forth discussion and two timeouts for legal advice from a state attorney, the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife Commission voted 4-2 Monday to take gray wolves off the state endangered species list.

In making the decision, commission members agreed with a wildlife staff appraisal that the state's wolves have expanded in number and range to the point that they no longer need protection under the state Endangered Species Act.

Oregon's wolves remain covered under the federal ESA in the western two-thirds of the state, and fish and wildlife officials say the state wolf management plan remains in effect and will protect wolves from illegal hunting.

The decision doesn't close the book on Oregon's work to manage wolves. Some commission members made it clear they preferred to delist wolves only in the eastern third of the state, where most of Oregon's 82 confirmed wolves live, but were prevented from doing so by language in the state law.

Meanwhile, conservation groups are expected to file a lawsuit over the commission's decision.

"I think that's very likely," said Amaroq Weiss of the Center for Biological Diversity. "I think they're in violation of the law. They didn't pay attention to the science."

Conservation groups believe Oregon's wolf population is too small and too fragile to delist, and is present in only 12 percent of its potential territory.

"There's no other species we would delist when it's absent from almost 90 percent of its habitat," Weiss said.

Oregon's ranchers, who had urged the fish and wildlife commission to follow the guidelines of the wolf plan and the recommendations of the department's biologists, cheered the decision.

"I'm relieved," said Todd Nash, wolf committee chairman for the Oregon Cattlemen's Association. "This sends a message to cattle producers that the ODFW Commission will stand by its commitment."

Nash said ranchers would not have supported a partial delisting.

"When we were paying the price (of livestock attacks) in Eastern Oregon, we fully believed we were doing it for the whole state," Nash said. "And we were proud to do it."

More than 150 people packed the fish and wildlife hearing room and 106 signed up to testify. Activists opposed to delisting wolves, many of them wearing matching orange

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Joshua Bessex/The Daily Astorian

The city of Astoria has tried to remove the communications tower from Coxcomb Hill for several years.

POLES APART

Forester objects to new Verizon monopole at Shively Park

By DERRICK DePLEDGE
The Daily Astorian

Astoria has wanted to move an old, unappealing communications tower it shares with Verizon Wireless off Coxcomb Hill, and away from the Astoria Column, for a decade.

But did the city, in an eagerness to reach a deal with Verizon, fail to vet a provision of the agreement that allows Verizon to erect a new 150-foot-tall monopole tower at Shively Park?

Ron Zilli thinks so.

The forester, who lives near Shively Park, has appealed decisions by the city's Historic Landmarks Commission and Planning Commission to approve the monopole.

His appeals, which will be heard by the City Council on Monday, claim the monopole is not compatible with the historic park and will be more obtrusive than city staff and Verizon have described.

Zilli also believes the city was biased in favor of the idea, since the City Council agreed to cover about \$70,000 in expenses by the Friends of the Astoria Column — and an additional \$20,000 from the city — for a Portland telecommunications consultant to help persuade Verizon to move the lattice tower off Coxcomb Hill.

Under the agreement, the city would get upgraded emergency communications at a new lattice tower it would share with Verizon off Reservoir Road, while Verizon would get the new tower, as well as the new monopole at Shively Park to help improve wireless coverage.

"A 150-foot-tall metal tower at the end of a knoll, to me, just seemed inherently in conflict with the natural setting there," said Zilli, who lives at 16th and James streets and often goes to Shively Park with his 10-year-old daughter.

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Ron Zilli

'Marching band changed my life'

Earning drum major was instrumental in Ilwaco student's transformation

By PATRICK WEBB
For EO Media Group

ILWACO, Wash. — Ilwaco High School senior Michael Johnson recalls exactly when everything changed.

It was the middle of his sophomore year.

"I didn't take school that seriously," said Johnson, candidly revealing he was kicked off the basketball team for poor grades.

"That was a big moment in my life,"

he said. "I asked myself, 'What are my passions?'"

The answer was music. Though rap and country aren't favorites, he enjoys all styles, from classical to jazz, musicals and operas, and even metal. So, he returned to the marching band.

"It was a wake-up call to focus on school," he said. "This is my future."

Johnson auditioned and won the job as the drum major for his junior year, a position he retained for his final year at IHS.

"In reality, marching band changed my life," he said. "To have the opportunity to be in marching band, and to lead, is great for my confidence."

Last Saturday, he led Ilwaco's band in the Auburn Veterans Day Parade, competing in the novice division.



Patrick Webb/For EO Media Group
Michael Johnson

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