



League Women Voter  
Rogue Valley

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Dear Project Coordinators:

The League of Women Voters of Oregon (of which The League of Women Voters Rogue Valley is a member), "...opposes degradation of all of Oregon's surface and ground water. The League supports policies and legislation that integrate water quality into resource management..." It is with this position in mind that the League of Women Voters Rogue Valley (LWVRV) submits comments and concerns regarding the Jordan Cove & Pacific Connector LNG Export Project (Applicant). The LWVRV reviewed the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) prepared by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) and the letter with enclosures dated February 12, 2015 to Kimberly D. Bose, Secretary of FERC, from the Office of Governor John A. Kitzhaber, M.D., signed by Richard Whitman, Natural Resources Policy Director (Governor's Letter). Particular attention was given to the comments submitted by the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (ODEQ).

After careful review and consideration, the LWVRV opposes approval by ODEQ of Applicant's application to build the Pacific Connector Gas Pipeline (PCGP) for the following reasons:

Applicant has, to date, failed to demonstrate that it can meet ODEQ standards to prevent impairment of the water quality of the waters of Oregon. The DEIS is replete with misstatements and omissions as pointed out by ODEQ's own comments. In addition, the Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife (ODFW) notes through its comments that Applicant's mitigation and minimization efforts are "...partially but not fully addressed in the DEIS..." (Page 101 of the Governor's Letter).

Applicant proposes to cross 400 water bodies, 35 of which are water quality limited or impaired (Impaired Waterways) through various means. Applicant has failed to present plans to prevent further degradation of Impaired Waterways caused by such crossings. Any degradation of Impaired Waterways would be a violation of ODEQ and Clean Water Act regulations and cannot be permitted. Applicant has also failed to present adequate mitigation plans where mitigation is possible.

For example, large swaths of old growth forests and vegetation that are integral parts of the maintenance of water quality in the watershed and especially in Impaired Waterways, are scheduled for permanent elimination. The effects of the elimination of tree canopy near Impaired Waterways and their tributaries are not adequately addressed. As ODEQ is aware, forest canopy plays an important role in the maintenance of water temperature in Impaired Waterways.

In its effort to permanently eliminate large swaths of forests and vegetation Applicant proposes to use pesticides in the PCGP easement. Applicant has failed to adequately demonstrate its ability to prevent said pesticides from fouling ground and surface water or from entering Impaired Waterways or their tributaries. We see no plans for adequate monitoring to insure that such contamination is prevented.

In its effort to replant certain parts of the PCGP easement, Applicant proposes to use fertilizers in the PCGP easement. Applicant has failed to adequately demonstrate its ability to prevent said fertilizers from fouling ground and surface water or from entering Impaired Waterways or their tributaries. We see no plans for adequate monitoring to insure that such contamination is prevented.



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On page 102 of the Governor's Letter ODFW states, "Pipeline crossings using HDD or other subsurface methodologies *can be expected to cause frac-outs...*" (*Emphasis added*). ODFW bases this assertion on their experience with other pipeline projects. HDD (horizontal direction drilling) is planned for use at several crossings. We will use the example of the Rogue River (Rogue) to highlight our concerns about the consequences of a frac-out at the Rogue crossing near Shady Cove, Oregon since we are familiar with this area.

The Rogue is an Impaired Waterway and is suspected by ODEQ of containing mercury, which naturally occurs in the soils where HDD is planned near Shady Cove. Arsenic is also naturally occurring in the local soils. Shady Cove is a community of approximately 3,000 residents, most of whom obtain drinking water from private wells. We estimate that there are at least 150 wells within a mile of the planned HDD crossing. Several hundred residents obtain drinking water from a private water company who takes water from the Rogue to serve its customers. Historically, Shady Cove has had challenges with private wells going dry as the population grew. The aquifer into which private wells are drilled has pockets of water that are interconnected in ways that are difficult, if not impossible, to discern. Drilling a well in one location, or fouling a well in one location, could have widespread detrimental effects on wells throughout the system.

On page 102 of the Governor's letter, ODFW indicates that in its experience when frac-outs occur there is leaking of drilling fluids that "can be water or oil based and can include additives..." As previously quoted, ODFW's experience is that frac-outs can be expected to happen. When a frac-out occurs it will contaminate the aquifer used by private wells. Contamination could include not only contaminated drilling fluids, but mercury and arsenic flushed into the aquifer. A frac-out could also contaminate the Rogue itself, fouling the only water supply available to hundreds of residents of Shady Cove and potentially Medford, since the Rogue is a back up source of drinking water for the City of Medford. The Rogue is also home to several species of endangered fish. While we realize that ODEQ does not analyze economic impacts of Applicant's project, we hope you will take note that fouling the water of the Rogue and aquifer would have devastating consequences to the local economy which depends on tourism, fishing, rafting and recreation.

It is our understanding that Applicant proposes to obtain approximately 62 million gallons of water from Oregon waters for use in hydrostatic testing. It is reasonable to expect that two or more tests could be required in some areas to insure that the PCGP is leak-free. Some of the water acquired for hydrostatic testing will come from Impaired Waterways and their tributaries. Applicant glosses over the impact of removing such a significant amount of water from Impaired Waterways and their tributaries, such as increased temperature. Applicant also glosses over the manner and location for returning water used in hydrostatic testing to the watershed and the possibility of erosion and cross-basin contamination which will further degrade Oregon's waterways.

The LWVRV does not need to tell ODEQ about all of the dangers to the 400 water bodies to be crossed, or the dangers of landslides that could cause contamination of nearby rivers, or to the danger of liquefaction conditions created by construction, or to the possibility of accidents during construction or when operation begins, all of which will degrade the waters of Oregon. ODEQ and other state agencies have enumerated thousands of unaddressed problems with Applicant's request for approval of its application. Mitigation is not an acceptable alternative in situations where Impaired Waterways would be contaminated or further degraded by Applicant's project. In those limited circumstances where mitigation might be possible, Applicant has failed to plan for appropriate mitigation. Independent monitoring of Applicant's project should be required throughout construction and operation.

**The League of Women Voters Rogue Valley urges ODEQ to reject the permits requested by Applicant.**