

Overlook Neighborhood Association

Alexandra Degher, Chair

chair@overlookneighborhood.org



November 16, 2019

To: Portland City Council and Multnomah County Commission

Re: Resolution opposing Zenith Energy Expansion and tar sands in Portland

Dear Mayor Wheeler and County Chair Kafoury:

The Overlook Neighborhood Association is dedicated to helping to create and support a thriving environment for business and community by building partnerships, supporting sustainable growth and creating opportunities for neighborhood fellowship. We write to express our deep concern about the Zenith Energy Terminal Expansion and increase of Alberta tar sands oil trains through our neighborhood.

As a community living and working along the rail line, we are concerned about the threat to life, safety and the environment due to accidents, potential spills and explosions posed by oil trains carrying tar sands crude. After the recent derailment of a train carrying volatile petroleum products under the Going Street overpass to Swan Island, we are particularly concerned for the safety of those living along the bluff and the businesses on Swan Island. Increased rail traffic also brings additional health impacts to our more than 7,000 residents from diesel pollution.

The Overlook Neighborhood Association urges the Portland City Council, Multnomah County Commission, agencies and officials to deny all future permits for new or expanded fossil fuel facilities, and to work together with the community to plan for a managed decline of existing fossil fuel infrastructure. We also urge you to conduct a neighborhood-by-neighborhood fossil fuel risk assessment that studies routine and worst-case scenarios for spills, leaks, explosions and train derailment, including risks to the Overlook Neighborhood.

Please find below a resolution regarding fossil fuels and Zenith Energy that the Overlook Neighborhood Association Board adopted at our November 5, 2019 meeting. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Alexandra Degher". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Alexandra Degher

Overlook Neighborhood Association, Chair

Cc: City Commissioners Jo Ann Hardesty, Amanda Fritz, Nick Fish and Chloe Eudaly.

Cc: County Commissioners Lori Stegmann, Jessica Vega Pederson, Sharon Meieran and Susheela Jayapal.

OVERLOOK NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION RESOLUTION REGARDING FOSSIL FUELS

WHEREAS transporting tar sands crude oil by rail through the Overlook Neighborhood poses extreme risks to the community and the environment from toxic accidents, spills, explosions and fires;

WHEREAS increasing the volume of trains increases the overall amount of diesel pollution adversely impacting the health of people who live and work near the rail line;

WHEREAS the terminal facility site is prone to soil liquefaction that could cause tank failure during a Cascadia Subduction Zone earthquake or other seismic event and impact the Overlook Neighborhood;

WHEREAS loading tar sands crude onto marine tankers poses unique risks to the Willamette River from spill or leak;

WHEREAS marine crude oil tankers traveling on the Willamette and Columbia rivers pose risks to the health of the rivers, salmon and other marine life;

WHEREAS some tar sands trains have added hydrogen sulfide or other hazardous substances that require special safety equipment in case of spill, leak or other disaster – such as self-contained breathing apparatus – that first responders are ill-prepared for;

WHEREAS the City of Portland's Climate Action Plan acknowledges the need to dramatically reduce greenhouse gas emissions to mitigate the effects of climate change, and tar sands are one of the most-polluting forms of fossil fuel;

Be it Resolved that the Overlook Neighborhood Association:

- Opposes the Zenith Energy expansion and all projects for new or expanded facilities that will result in an increase in tar sands transport or storage in Portland;
- Urges the Portland City Council, Multnomah County Commission, agencies and officials to deny all future permits for new or expanded fossil fuel facilities, and to work together with the community to plan for a managed decline of existing fossil fuel infrastructure.
- Urges the Portland City Council, Multnomah County Commission and relevant agencies to conduct a neighborhood-by-neighborhood fossil fuel risk assessment that studies routine and worst-case scenarios for spills, leaks, explosions and train derailment, including risks to the Overlook Neighborhood.
- Urges the Portland City Council and Multnomah County Commission to pursue policies that hold fossil fuel companies financially accountable for their pollution and other damage to Portland and surrounding waterways.

Approved by the Overlook Neighborhood Association Board on November 5, 2019.

Alexandra Degher, Chair
Christian Trejbal, Vice Chair
May Wallace, Sustainability Chair