

Doubling the Size of Port Westward: A Bad Deal for Families & Farms in Columbia County



Attend Important Public Hearing

May 6, 2013, 6:30PM

Circuit Courtroom, Third Floor, Courthouse Annex

230 Strand St., St. Helens, OR

What is proposed?

The Port of St. Helens—the same Port that bent over backwards courting coal export companies—is asking Columbia County to change its Comprehensive Plan and allow large-scale industrial development on nearly 1,000 acres of land protected for agriculture. This is a significant change for residents that will see rail traffic soar on the Portland & Western rail line and people who value living in a rural area.

Suggestions for Public Comments to the Planning Commission.

Rezoning farmland for industrial development will increase rail and road traffic. The Port's application doesn't hide the ball: it wants to double the size of Port Westward to take advantage of rail access. The Port has no plans to deal with transportation impacts to Columbia County, particularly from unit train and truck traffic, which would serve the expanded Port Westward site.

The proposal paves the way for dirty coal export projects. Here are the facts:

- In January 2012, the Port signed a lease option agreement with Kinder Morgan promising to find a location for a coal terminal.
- After PGE rejected the first proposed location, the Port now seeks to rezone a large section of agricultural land with river access for industrial use, which would allow coal.
- The Port's application states explicitly that potential future uses include coal export.

Coal dust contains toxic pollution, including arsenic, mercury, and lead. For farmers, landowners, and communities along the rail line, coal dust is more than a nuisance—it's a public health issue.

The County should protect high quality farmland. Many people live in Columbia County because they value living in a rural area and support our local farmers. The Port's proposal would eliminate over 600 acres of productive farmland. While the Port likes to talk about "jobs," this rezone is not about more jobs: the Port's own application acknowledges the type of development it wants to attract is not labor intensive.

The majority of the existing Port Westward site is open for development—use it first. Why pave over productive farmland when the majority of the existing Port Westward site is empty?

For more info about coal export in Columbia County contact:

Clean Columbia County - www.CleanColumbiaCounty.info

Columbia Riverkeeper - Dan Serres Dan@ColumbiaRiverkeeper.org, (503) 890-2441 www.ColumbiaRiverkeeper.org