

Nov. 1, 2021  
Alliance for Community Engagement SWWA (ACE)  
Vancouver WA

Vancouver City Council  
Vancouver WA

Dear Staff and Vancouver City Councilmembers:

In a global pandemic, the Vancouver City Council had the forethought and courage to establish a moratorium on bulk fossil fuel terminals in its jurisdiction. Your leadership carries a lot of weight on this issue as a City that faced the threat of the largest oil-by-rail terminal in North America. We applaud your action and ask that you continue on course to turn the moratorium into an updated code, in spite of the delay due to the procedural appeal by the Western State Petroleum Association (WSPA.) WSPA is an industry group representing some of the largest fossil fuel companies, including Exxon, Shell, and Marathon, the company that now owns what was once Tesoro. ACE contends that WSPA should not have an outsized voice in a process designed to protect Vancouver.

Critical issues of seismic instability, public health and community safety were revealed through the long EFSEC process of evaluating and understanding [impacts](#)<sup>1</sup> of the proposed [Tesoro-Savage oil terminal](#)<sup>2</sup>. These same concerns apply to all bulk fossil fuel facilities in this region and are relevant should any new project be proposed. The language the Council passed to establish the moratorium addressed these issues as a matter of public health and community safety. That language also spoke to the vision of the City for future development not being tied to the fossil fuel industry. Foreshadowing this foundational reasoning, in 2019 the [Port of Vancouver Commission passed a policy](#)<sup>3</sup> to not pursue bulk fossil fuel terminals, in direct response to the long, contentious and costly Tesoro-Savage project review.

Yet, in an effort to delay and intimidate the City, WSPA appealed the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) decision on procedural grounds. This delay has stalled the momentum of the Council and the community, as they convert the moratorium into a well-constructed permanent policy to protect public health and safety, while the SEPA analysis is updated. In addition to this delay, other industry groups are seeking to gain a foothold for other high-risk energy infrastructure. Top on that list is North-west Natural, which is trying to establish Renewable Natural Gas (RNG) in Vancouver. RNG is a false solution that will keep Vancouver tied to fossil fuels while doing nothing to reduce emissions.

As a coalition of organizations and community members, ACE fully supports and protects the public engagement and issue evaluation required under SEPA. The review of impacts and the required public engagement is core to any lead agency adequately understanding the weight of its decision. Industry tactics of delay and obstruction undermine Vancouver's ability to protect the health and safety of its community. We support the City ensuring all SEPA procedural requirements are met on this crit-

ical and timely issue. We urge the City to continue moving forward, while updating the SEPA analysis, turning the moratorium into a permanent ban against new and expansion of existing bulk fossil fuel terminals. The reasons City Council gave when it first initiated the moratorium in 2020 still ring true, and are more timely than ever.

Additionally, the push to consider how this code change interacts with the intention to have cleaner industry instead of bulk fossil fuel facilities is important, as mentioned in the staff memo discussed Monday, Nov. 1, 2021. However, we urge the City to consider focusing this particular code change on the issue of what is not allowed, and then lean into changes needed to enable and incentivize a clean energy transition through the City's climate action planning work. This focus will lead to a more clear and consistent direction for community and industry alike.

Finally, learning from other jurisdictions is a point identified in the staff memo. This learning is important, to understand what others have done and how they are navigating this work. That said, we encourage the City of Vancouver to assert its own path based on its experience with the Tesoro-Savage proposal and other facilities, as well as the Port of Vancouver's policy and work to transition away from fossil fuels. The City is well positioned to move forward with a strong and protective policy against bulk fossil fuel terminals. We encourage the City to do this in a way that protects our health and safety, and aligns local land use codes with existing City policy and goals.

Signed,

Alliance for Community Engagement SWWA (ACE)  
Climate Action SWWA  
Columbia Riverkeeper  
Friends of Clark County  
Friends of the Columbia Gorge  
Loo Wit Sierra Club  
Oregon Physicians for Social Responsibility  
Sunrise Movement SWWA  
Vancouver Audubon  
Washington Environmental Council  
Washington Physicians for Social Responsibility

Erin Saylor, Columbia Riverkeeper  
Mark Leed, Sierra Club Loo Wit Group  
Anna Doty, Washington Environmental Council  
Nick Manning, Washington Physicians for Social Responsibility  
Cathryn Chudy  
Heidi Cody  
Don and Alona Steinke



**Friends of  
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**SIERRA  
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**SUNRISE  
MOVEMENT**



**WASHINGTON  
ENVIRONMENTAL  
COUNCIL**



**Vancouver Audubon Society**



**WASHINGTON PHYSICIANS  
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY**

#### ENDNOTES

- 1 "Tesoro Savage Adjudication Findings | Stand up to Oil." n.d. <https://www.standuptooil.org/tesoro-savage/tesoro-savage-adjudication-findings/>.
- 2 "Final Report on Vancouver Oil Terminal Highlights Safety, Environmental Risks." n.d. Opb. Accessed October 28, 2021. <https://www.opb.org/news/article/vancouver-port-terminal-final-report-safety-risk/>.
- 3 "Tesoro Savage Adjudication Findings | Stand up to Oil." n.d. <https://www.standuptooil.org/tesoro-savage/tesoro-savage-adjudication-findings/>.