



League of Women Voters of Coos County
PO Box 1571
Coos Bay, OR 97420

26 August 2019

City of Coos Bay, City Council
Attention Henry Hearley, Assistant Planner, hhearley@lcog.org and consultant to the City of Coos Bay, Oregon

RE: Land Use Application #187-18-000153 – Jordan Cove Energy Project Navigation and Efficiency and Reliability of the Coos Bay Deep Draft Navigation Channel.

Dear Coos Bay City Council and Mr. Hearley:

The League of Women Voters of Coos County stands in opposition to granting a permit to amend the existing Coos Bay Estuary Management Plan and zoning maps to change approximately 3.3 Acres from 52-NA to DDNC-DA in the Coos Bay estuary to construct Navigation Reliability Improvement #4.

Since the 1950s, the League has been in the forefront of efforts to protect air, land, and water resources. The League of Women Voters of the United States (LWVUS) “believes that natural resources should be managed as interrelated parts of life-supporting ecosystems. Resources should be conserved and protected to assure their future availability. Pollution of these resources should be controlled in order to preserve the physical, chemical and biological integrity of ecosystems and to protect public health.” The League of Women Voters of Oregon (LWVOR) “. . . opposes degradation of all of Oregon’s surface and ground water. . . .” and declares that climate change is the greatest environmental challenge of our generation. The following resolution passed almost unanimously at the 2018 National LWV Convention: “The League of Women Voters supports a set of climate assessment criteria that ensures that energy policies align with current climate science. These criteria require that the latest climate science be used to evaluate proposed energy policies and major projects in light of the globally-agreed-upon goal of limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees C, informed by the successful spirit of global cooperation as affirmed in the UN COP 21 Paris agreement.” Finally, at the 2019 LWVOR Convention, a resolution declaring a “climate emergency” passed unanimously.

The local Leagues in all four counties affected by the Jordan Cove Energy Project are on record in opposition to the entire project based on the above positions. We have submitted statements in opposition at various levels, including response to the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) and testimony to

the Division of State Lands (DSL).

The Coos County League was an active participant in preparation of the Coos Bay Estuary Management Plan, attending meetings, testifying, and serving on support committees that prepared White Papers. We believe that the proposed project does not conform to that plan, and by extension the Coos Bay City Comprehensive Plan. Our League has a long record of involvement in land use planning issues in the county, and a number of our members reside in Coos Bay.

We oppose this permit on the following grounds:

The area under consideration allows the placement of dredge transport pipelines in the 52-NA, 53-CA, 54- DA, and 55-CA Estuarine Zones. We believe this is in violation of the Coos Bay Estuary Management Plan which includes the following definitions:

- Natural – in all estuaries, areas shall be designated to assure the protection of significant fish and wildlife habitats, of continued biological productivity within the estuary, and of scientific, research, and educational needs. **These shall be managed to preserve the natural resources in recognition of dynamic, natural, geological, and evolutionary processes.** Such areas shall include, at a minimum, all major tracts of salt marsh, tideflats, and seagrass and algae beds.
- Conservation – in all estuaries, except those in the overall Oregon Estuary Classification which are classed for preservation, areas shall be designated for long-term uses of renewable resources that do not require major alteration of the estuary, except for the purpose of restoration. **These areas shall be managed to conserve the natural resources and benefits.** These shall include areas needed for maintenance and enhancement of biological productivity, recreational and aesthetic uses, and aquaculture. They shall include tracts of significant habitat smaller or of less biological importance than those in (1) above, and recreational or commercial oyster and clam beds not included in (1) above. Areas that are partially altered and adjacent to existing development of moderate intensity

which do not possess the resource characteristics of natural or development units.

These areas were designated as natural or conservation units because they are important to the overall estuarine ecosystem. They were not set aside for later development but were and are to be protected for preservation and conservation. Jordan Cove proposes to change the designation of these zones in order to accomplish its goals within these management units, but this will clearly require a Goal Exception. We agree with Oregon Shores Coastal Coalition that the conditions required for an Exception do not exist, and therefore the request for a rezone should be denied.

We note that, despite the staff report recommending denial, the Coos Bay Planning Commission recommends approval of the request for a rezone. We are unable to find the analysis refuting the conclusion of the staff report. It seems likely that the supported analysis of the staff report would prevail over the unsupported decision of the Planning Commission, and we urge the City of Coos Bay to deny this request.

We would also like to note that the items preceding this public hearing include:

1) Adoption of Resolution 19-18 Approving Bay Area Enterprise Zone Agreement with Jordan Cove Energy Project L.P. and

2) Approval of Bay Area Enterprise Zone Community Service Fee Intergovernmental Agreement

The placement of these agenda items before the hearing sends the message that the hearing is merely a requirement, but that the decision is already made. This is hardly fair to the many citizens who have spent hours researching the issues and constructing their testimony. It is disappointing to see this lack of respect from our city leaders.

We have noted in statements to FERC and DSL that there are many unanswered questions and unsupported assertions in the materials submitted by Pembina in support of the Jordan Cove Energy Project. Given the lack of factual basis of support, we do not believe that the City of Coos Bay can meet its responsibility under state planning laws if it approves this permit.

Sincerely,

Alice Carlson, Co-President
League of Women Voters of Coos County

The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government. It influences public policy through education and advocacy. It neither supports nor opposes any political party or candidate. It is open to men and women of voting age.