



The League of Women Voters of Portland

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DATE: November 3, 2015

TO: Mayor Hales, Commissioners Fish, Fritz, Novick, and Saltzman

FROM: Margaret Noel, President
Julie Chapman, Action Committee member

RE: **Resolution No. 1156:** Adopt a policy opposing all project proposals that would increase the amount of crude oil being transported by rail through the City of Portland and the City of Vancouver, Washington. **Resolution No. 1157:** Oppose expansion of infrastructure whose primary purpose is transporting or storing fossil fuels in or through Portland or adjacent waterways.

The League of Women Voters of Portland urges your support of Resolutions 1156 and 1157.

Since the 1950s, the League has worked at the federal and state levels to protect air, land, and water resources. The League's position is that members work to "preserve the physical, chemical, and biological integrity of the ecosystem, with maximum protection of public health and the environment" with a focus on demanding pollution prevention. More recently, the League has lobbied vigorously for comprehensive legislation to control global climate change by setting a cap on greenhouse gas pollution and by encouraging conservation and renewable energy. Any major increase in fossil fuel industry infrastructure is not consistent with the current League of Women Voters natural resources and climate change positions, nor with Portland's Climate Action Plan.

Both of the proposed resolutions recognize the implications of shipping fossil fuels within the U.S. or for export to foreign ports. The methods of transport and storage are dangerous to public health and safety, and the remote use of fossil fuels has local and global climate effects. Numerous scientific studies confirm the significant transfer of atmospheric pollutants from Asia to the U.S., and specifically to the Pacific Northwest.^{1 2} Asian pollution accounts for about 20 percent of the total ozone pollution in the spring in the western states.³ In a frequently cited study from 2014, the authors demonstrate how air pollution in the U.S. is affected by China's production of goods for the American market.⁴

"To promote political responsibility through informed and active participation in government."

In order to stay true to Portland's Climate Action Plan we must take into account the effects of these business decisions. Pollution emitted elsewhere does not drift off harmlessly into space. We can ride our bikes to work in the rain, and use our impressive public transportation system in lieu of cars, but unless we adopt a global view of the impact our local policies have on carbon emissions, we risk repeating the legend of "fiddling while Rome burns." We could be designing solar-powered robots in our LEED-certified workshops, while weather patterns become increasingly extreme, non-mobile species become extinct, and the oceans no longer support the life forms (krill, pteropods, and coral reefs) necessary to the marine food web.

The League appreciates Mayor Hales and Commissioner Fritz's leadership in bringing these resolutions before Council for discussion and adoption. We also want to thank staff for the detailed and comprehensive information included in the resolutions. They provide a firm foundation for protecting public health and safety and the environment. We wholeheartedly support the proposed resolutions.

¹ Teng, H, et al., (2012) "Potential impacts of Asian carbon aerosols on future US warming," *Geophysical Research Letters*, 39(11), doi: 10.1029/2012FL051723, <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1029/2012GL051723/full>

² Jaffe D, et al., (1999) "Transport of Asian air pollution to North America." *Geophysical Research Letters*, 26(6):711-714; <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1029/1999GL900100/pdf>

³ Zhang L, et al.,(2008) "Transpacific transport of ozone pollution and the effect of recent Asian emission increases on air quality in North America: An integrated analysis using satellite, aircraft, ozonesonde, and surface observations," *Atmos Chem Phys*, 8(20):6117-6136; http://acmg.seas.harvard.edu/publications/2008/zhang2008_ACPD-2008-0154-ms.pdf

⁴ Lin, Jintai, et al., (2014) "China's international trade and air pollution in the United States," *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the USA (PNAS)*, 111(5):1736-1741, doi: 10.1073/pnas.1312860111; <http://www.pnas.org/content/111/5/1736.full>