

Testimony on SB 412

Dear Esteemed Members of the House Committee on Energy and Environment:

My family have lived and thrived in Portland for fifteen years. They initially chose, and continue to choose Portland for its arts community, its schooling, its film industry, its sportswear industry, and for its demonstrated commitment to sustainability. Portland has rejected nuclear power, rejected the export from Portland of fossil fuels, namely coal and oil, and most recently propane. None of these activities have a place inside or close to our Portland metropolitan area. Portlanders have rejected dangerous energy shipments by rail, including transshipment of oil and coal through the Columbia Gorge and Portland to other rail destinations, although that still continues. Compared to elsewhere in the US and indeed North America, Portland has scored high on these and other environmental and sustainability issues, recently gaining a president's award as a Climate-Action Champion. My family highly values Portland's commitment to and leadership in, exploring ways to make our city more sustainable.

It is an established fact that our Willamette and Columbia rivers contain hundreds of dangerous toxins in their sediments, and to allow any organization carte blanche on dumping these sediments (as dredged solid waste) and defining that to be beneficial is not in the public interest. Nor is it in the public interest to artificially prop-up the existing marine operations of the Port of Portland, which are notoriously unprofitable. Doing so would not only remove a major incentive to do better, but would unlevel the competitive playing field which all real companies are subject to. It is therefore in the greatest public interest that I encourage you to defeat SB 412.

The Port of Portland wants to continue to dump dredged solid waste on West Hayden Island. This location has seen the Port of Portland steam-roller the already fragile public review process provided by Oregon DEQ for careful consideration of the placement of "productive use" dredge spoils on West Hayden Island. Senate Bill 412 will totally eliminate any case-by-case public input for careful review of these contaminated and toxic materials. What's more, the Port of Portland already (and historically, on Jan 8, 2014) abandoned plans for any development on West Hayden Island, saying that they could not afford the mitigation required by the city. Abandoning plans for development leaves no "productive use" for this site.

For more than 20 years, the Port has placed these contaminated and toxic wastes within half-a-mile of manufactured home communities populated by many whose health is already compromised. This makes half of the population of Hayden Island virtual prisoners in their own homes to avoid the polluted air from the ambient dust blowing off these uncovered West Hayden Island dredge spoils sites.

For these reasons and many more, please defeat SB 412 as not only ill-conceived legislation threatening our valued neighbors and wildlife and their surrounding natural habitat, It is also another attempt by the Port of Portland to bypass critically important public review for their narrow purposes that do not serve the greater good of the general public .

Respectfully,  
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