

HELZER testimony opposing SB 412, Oregon House Committee on Energy and the Environment, 5.19.15

It is in the greatest public interest that I encourage you to defeat SB 412. I have been a resident and business owner on Hayden Island for 14 years, near the 825 acres of West Hayden Island in the Columbia River. It is one of the Port of Portland's dump sites; and I know first-hand what this kind of destructive legislation can bring to our area's people and wildlife.

This location has seen the Port steam-roll the already fragile public review process provided by the DEQ for careful consideration of the placement of "productive use" dredge spoils on West Hayden Island. What's worse, Senate Bill 412 will totally eliminate any case-by-case public input for careful review of these contaminated and toxic materials by the Port of Portland. Isn't it interesting that the Port has already abandoned plans for any development on West Hayden Island, and has no "productive use" planned for this WHI site; but still want it as cheap dump 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 our neighbors 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.

In addition, the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers is on record as closely monitoring the impact these accumulating dredge spoils have on the Columbia River floodplain, and the likely flooding the rising water will have on this contiguous community, both human built and wildlife habitat. Further, designated by METRO as a high-value urban natural wildlife habitat, the contiguous 825 acres of West Hayden Island continue to be exposed to these pollutants, poisoning wildlife there, as well as polluting protective shallows in the Columbia River for juvenile salmon and other threatened species. The Indians are watching, too, as it may be a major Treaty violation.

For these reasons and many more, please defeat SB 412 as an ill-conceived legislation threatening our valued neighbors and Native Tribes, wildlife, and our surrounding natural habitat. Put simply, it's another attempt by the Port of Portland to bypass critically important public review they're afraid of. The Port not only does not serve the greater good of the general public on WHI, but also endangers it further.

Respectfully,

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