

Introduction

My name is Bill Gunderson. I am fourth generation Oregonian, fourth generation commercial fisherman, graduate of OSU, school of Engineering, and I am a registered professional civil engineer. I reside in Corvallis where I still actively practice engineering. The reason for my testimony today is that I feel that I can bring some insight and understanding of the history of locating and permitting shore landing sites for submarine fiber optic cable into Oregon. I think that my experience is relevant to HB 2603.

I was the lead engineer and project manager that found and established the feasibility of the WCI cable landing at Nedonna Beach nearly 20 years ago. I also pulled together the commercial fishermen and introduced them to the cable industry which led to the development of the Oregon Fisherman's Cable Committee (OFCC). The Nedonna Beach Landing site was chosen because of three very important reasons; first the route into the site from the oceanside was not fished to any degree by trawlers and therefore there was limited chance to snag a cable by a trawler dragging their net, secondly the County had a beach access easement that allowed for drilling and placement of the cable landing manhole, and third the Tillamook Bay Railroad, owned and operated by the Port of Tillamook Bay, had a direct route through the coast range to Banks and therefore an easy route for a fiber optic cable to reach its destination near Hillsboro.

Trawl fishermen from numerous Oregon ports met with the cable representatives in our office and developed a draft agreement. A meeting was set up with the DSL and Governor's office. The agreement provided that this cable and future cables coming into Oregon would come through a well-defined corridor that fishermen would and could avoid. If by chance a fisherman snagged their net on something in that area, they could call a 24-hour hotline and would be given instructions to either try and retrieve their gear or cut it off for later retrieval by the cable company. The fisherman would be compensated for their lost gear.

This agreement has worked well for the submarine cable industry, the OFCC and the Oregon Public over the past 20 years. The recent permitting issues related to the Edge Cable Holdings, deems it necessary to take a closer look at permitting reviews more carefully in the future.

My principal reason for supporting HB 2603:

In reference to future submarine cable landing permits, it is a very important and an essential part of the Joint Permit Application, JPA, in Section 7, Project Specific Criteria and Alternatives Analysis, to justify the reasons for permitting a new landing location over other permitted landing locations. The Edge Cable Holdings landing, in Terra Del Mar was contested by the locals and supported in the end by the county and the state given the information provided in their JPA permit. Had the permit included the identification of all other permitted landing sites, in Oregon, then there may have been more support by the agencies to defend the local concerns of the neighbors in Terra Del Mar. HB 2603 should help establish rules which require a more thorough study and evaluation of landing corridors and beach landing locations available to future submarine fiber optic cables. These rules should include establishing an independent review outside of agency oversight.

Suggested amendments for Section 4(b) of HB 2603

SECTION 4. (1) (b) Requiring that new landing locations be sited at existing landing locations or on State, County or private properties approved through the permitting process. Coastal State and County Parks should not be considered.