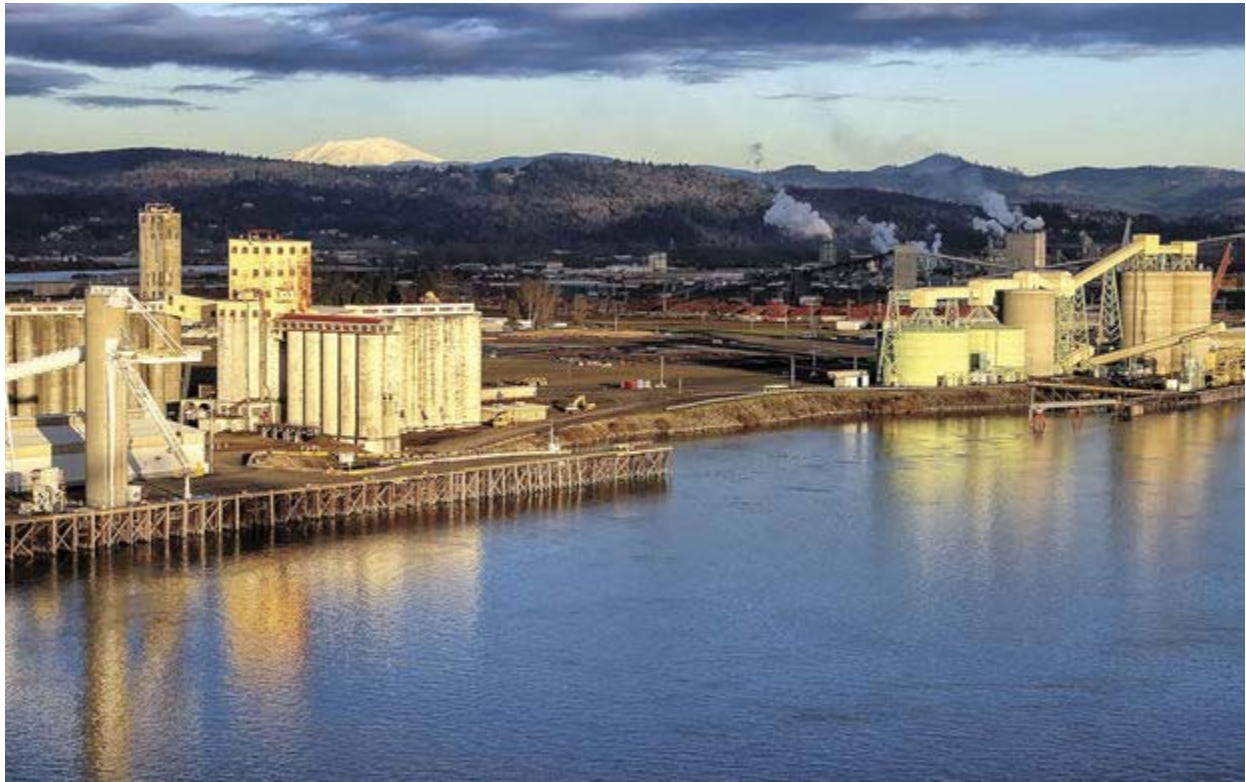


The Daily News Online, available at http://tdn.com/news/local/port-of-longview-commissioners-reject-haven-energy-lease-on-/article_f7e284cc-c73f-11e4-bc68-5f5ac32ce6b8.html (last accessed March 10, 2015)

Port of Longview commissioners reject Haven Energy lease on 3-0 vote



Bill Wagner / The Daily News

This view of the Port of Longview from the Lewis and Clark Bridge shows Berth 4, front. Haven Energy plans to build propane and butane storage tanks behind the waterfront tanks and elevators at left in the photo.

1 hour ago • By [Marissa Luck](#), [Brooks Johnson](#)

Port of Longview commissioners unanimously rejected the proposed Haven Energy propane export terminal Tuesday morning, voicing concerns about the safety and the true economic impact of the \$300 million project.

Commissioners Lou Johnson and Darold Dietz said they would support the project, but not at the proposed 24-acre site near Berth 4. Commissioner Bob Bagaason said it came down to a matter of trust.

It was not immediately clear whether the vote killed the project.

The vote came after 90 minutes of testimony featuring a primarily negative response from the crowd of nearly 200 people. More than 20 people spoke against the project, and half as many spoke in favor.

Following the vote, Dietz said no one factor led to his vote.

“It was everything. ... I’m not afraid of the project, it’s a good, clean commodity needed worldwide,” he said.

But the proposed location — in the port’s “laydown” yard — just wouldn’t suffice, he said. “I think it was the right decision,” said Dietz, who seemed to struggle with the decision during the meeting.

Johnson also said he was concerned with the location of the proposed export terminal.

Dietz and Johnson are longshore workers’ long connections to the dockworkers union, which opposed the Haven plan.

Bagaason said “Haven” didn’t bring their A-game” to a Feb. 19 port commissioner meeting and couldn’t answer commissioners’ questions in enough detail. Commissioners also felt they were brought into the lease negotiations too late in the process, he said.

Haven said it will continue looking for a site for the terminal, locally as well as elsewhere. Haven officials said the terminal would be worth a half billion dollars to the economy over the next decade.

“We believe strongly in the project and the value it has to offer to communities as well as the company. We will continue to look for any avenues to complete the project that can provide so much benefit to so many people,” said Greg Bowles, president of Haven Energy, said following the vote.

Dennis Woodward of Kelso praised the decision by the commissioners, and said he supports the project if it were located at Barlow Point, the west Longview location owned by the port but which does not have adequate rail service.

Longview environmental activist John Green said he was “relieved,” and chastised energy companies for taking “short cuts” on safety.

Those in favor included local building trades and some residents hoping to see a jump start to Longview’s economy.

The port has been in talks with Houston-based Haven Energy for nearly a year over the lease agreement for the 24-acre terminal. The company would purchase propane being burned off into

the atmosphere at the Bakken oil fields in North Dakota and transport it by pressurized rail cars to the Port of Longview.

The propane would then be transferred into two 10-story-tall refrigerated tanks capable of holding 900,000 barrels of fluid.

Haven would ship butane and propane to markets in Asia, Latin America and Hawaii. The propane is used as a raw material for plastic manufacturing or as fuel for cooking, heating or powering cars and trucks.

The company estimates the facility would generate about \$4 million in taxes and fees for the port annually — more than the port's property tax levy, which is expected to raise \$3.2 million in revenue this year. Once built, the terminal would generate about 110 to 125 direct, indirect and induced jobs, according to Haven's consultant, ECONorthwest.

The project won the support of the building trades and construction industry, which stood to gain 2,000 jobs from terminal construction, according to ECONorthwest.

But opponents, concerned about safety and the environment, have wondered about the risks of transporting and storing a potentially explosive substance on the Columbia River, so close to the Oregon Way Bridge and major local mills. They've also wondered how the terminal would affect recreation on the river, because ships carrying the propane likely would need to have a "security zone" of up to 500 yards. About three ships would have exited the terminal each month.

The local longshoremen's union also took issue with how the terminal would alter port operations — potentially minimizing the port's ability to market itself to break bulk clients. The terminal would take up almost a third of valuable laydown space used to store break bulk materials, such as steel and wind turbines.

Haven's option on the land expires Wednesday.

A large crowd of both supporter and opponents filled the Expo Center on Tuesday to give a last-minute pitch to the port commissioners.

David Hahn, a regional carpenter's union representative, told the port commissioners, "This project would be huge" and provide family income to support children. "We are in support as the carpenters."

That drew applause, but more noise came following the next five speakers, who said the project would not create enough jobs and would pose unacceptable safety risks.

Ann Bennett, an independent medical recruiter from Longview, said, "If this project is approved, it will continue to attract other controversial businesses."

Still, local laborers and their representatives who stand to benefit the most in the short term touted the project as positive overall.

“When you have a project of this magnitude, everybody benefits,” said Lee Newgent, executive secretary of Washington State Building and Construction Trades Council.

Rick Von Rock, a retired pulp and paper union leader from Kelso, took issue with critics’ slogan that “we can do better” than propane and coal terminal.

“We haven’t. (So) let’s work with what will come here and make the best of that.”

If today’s opponents had been alive around in the 1920s, he said, there would have been “no Longview Fibre, no Weyerhaeuser, no reason for the port.”

Kelso’s Linda Horst focused on safety concerns about handling large amounts of propane and butane.

“Why would you take such a gamble?” she asked, saying the jobs are not worth the safety risks to life and property.

Port management sought to allay longshore and community concerns about the project in an executive briefing released Tuesday morning. Among the highlights:

- The project, which would reduce the “breakdown laydown yard by one-third,” still would sharply increase port revenues from that property. The average annual net revenue from the entire laydown yard between 2009 and 2014 was \$1.3 million. Haven would produce port revenue of at least \$3.2 million and perhaps as much as \$5.7 million annually, according to the port. Haven’s presence would not deter the port from continuing to solicit break bulk cargo business — wind turbines, pallets and other non-containerized goods.
- The port acknowledged that “this is not an inherently safe project with zero risks. But it is important to note that the proposed facility will incorporate all presently available safety measures and will undergo a full environmental impact analysis process to ensure that all relevant issues have been considered and safely mitigated.” A Coast Guard analysis of “exclusions zones will be conducted,” and the lease could be cancelled if it would have too big an impact on port operations.
- The Haven project would not create a lot of jobs, but the revenue the port would earn from the project would help it develop other facilities and lure other employers to the port.

For more on this story, check tdn.com for updates and see Wednesday's print edition of The Daily News.