

April 16, 2015

Via Email Followed by Mail

Energy Site Evaluation Council
c/o Chairman William Lynch
P.O. Box 43172
Olympia, WA 98504-3172
EFSEC@utc.wa.gov

Re: Tesoro-Savage Vancouver Energy Terminal: DEIS and Public Comment Period

Dear Council Members and Chairman Lynch:

The undersigned organizations, associations, and businesses represent hundreds of thousands of individuals and interests across Washington that share a deep concern about the proposed Tesoro-Savage oil shipping terminal in Vancouver, Washington. The proposed Tesoro-Savage terminal would receive and ship over 360,000 barrels of crude oil every day—crude oil that would travel by rail through Spokane, along the banks of the Columbia River, through Vancouver, and then be shipped by barge or tanker out the Columbia River to the Pacific Ocean. This proposal increases the risk of oil spills, derailments, and accidents; it threatens communities, waterways, natural resources, economies, and ways of life.

The public review process for the draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for Tesoro-Savage is of great importance to people across Washington. While a few of the undersigned organizations have been granted party status as interveners in the upcoming EFSEC adjudication, many more are relying upon the DEIS public review and comment period as their primary avenue for participation in this process. It is imperative that the Council provide a full and fair process to ensure all voices are heard.

At the March 17, 2015 EFSEC meeting, EFSEC staff told the Council that the DEIS would be several thousand pages long and that, in general, the public comment period for DEISs was 30 days. Thirty days is simply too short for public review and comment on such a major proposal. Similar proposals, such as the proposed coal export terminals at Cherry Point and Longview, Washington, have been given 90-120 day period for public scoping comments. For the last project EFSEC reviewed, the Whistling Ridge Energy Project, EFSEC originally announced a 59-day comment period for the DEIS that was later extended to 98 days. (The Whistling Ridge DEIS was approximately 1,500 pages, including appendices.)

To ensure adequate time for public review and comment given the scale and impact of this project, we respectfully request that:

- EFSEC hold a public comment period for the Tesoro-Savage DEIS of 120 days;
- EFSEC hold public hearings on the DEIS during the evening hours in accessible locations in Vancouver and Spokane;
- EFSEC provide paper copies of the DEIS in a timely manner upon request;
- EFSEC allow both written (on-line and hard copy) and oral comments at hearings on the DEIS; and
- EFSEC plan its hearings to accommodate all citizens who wish to provide testimony. We anticipate a high level of engagement in the review of the DEIS and recommend that you choose locations and approaches to the public comment period that accommodates this interest, including ensuring venues that are large enough and there is enough time for all attendees to present their concerns. It is important that all these meetings are ADA-approved facilities and/or accommodations have been made for hearing/sight/mobility impaired citizens.

Finally, we remind EFSEC that SEPA's regulations require environmental impact statements to be "readable reports ... written in plain language" to allow the public to "understand the most significant and vital information concerning the proposed action, alternatives, and impacts." WAC 197-11-425. The Council is faced with a vital decision in its review of the Tesoro-Savage proposal, and we appreciate the work of the Council to ensure this process is open, transparent, and fair.

Thank you,

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Citizens for a Clean Harbor
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Columbia Riverkeeper
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Columbia Waterfront, LLC.
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Evergreen Islands
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Friends of the Columbia Gorge
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Friends of the Earth
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Oregon Physicians for Social Responsibility
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