Docket EF-131590 Tesoro Savage CBR Scoping Comment #132

From: Friends of the Columbia Gorge <Advocacy@GorgeFriends.org> on behalf of Sara Mauritz <smauritz@comcast.net>
Sent: Tuesday, October 29, 2013 12:31 PM
To: EFSEC (UTC)
Subject: Docket No. EF-131590 Application No. 2013-01 Tesoro Savage Vancouver Energy Distribution Terminal Comments

Categories: Comment, Blue Category

Oct 29, 2013

Energy Facility Site Evaluation Council
WA

Dear Site Evaluation Council,

Please deny the permit for the Tesoro Savage Vancouver Energy Distribution Terminal.

Once again the National Scenic Area is being threatened by industry.
The Columbia River Gorge is too valuable a treasure to risk for the sake of a few jobs. Let us not forget the recent oil train explosion and fire that was in the news. The only safe way to protect the Gorge is to keep potentially dangerous traffic out of it. A National Treasurer is more valuable than a few fleeting jobs.

The proposed Tesoro Savage project would transport 360,000 barrels of oil per day through the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area. I have grave concerns about this proposal and its impact on the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area. The scope of review under the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) must include the following:

What is the purpose of the project? The purpose statement must not be narrowly worded to only include the construction of an oil terminal for distribution of oil through the region. The purpose should be broad enough to include providing for the energy needs of the region and providing opportunities for appropriate waterfront development that benefits the local community.

Is there a need for this project? There is not. This proposal, in conjunction with other existing and pending oil terminals, would result in a glut of oil in the Northwest that would far exceed current consumption. There are alternative waterfront development opportunities that would create jobs and generate greater benefits for the local community.

What are the alternatives? A "no action" alternative; an alternative relying on other oil terminals that already exist, are in the permitting process or under construction; and reducing reliance on fossil fuels all must be considered as viable alternatives. Transport routes that do not pass through congressionally protected areas, like the Columbia River Gorge also must be included in the alternatives analyses. The EIS should also consider reasonably foreseeable waterfront development opportunities that would be incompatible with an oil terminal, such as mixed use development with waterfront amenities.

What are the direct, indirect and cumulative effects of the proposal, including transportation impacts on the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area, such as:

- Increased air pollution from train diesel emission. The Gorge already suffered from smog and visibility impairment up to 95% of the time.

- Rail expansion into sensitive areas. Rail lines in the Gorge are currently near capacity. This proposal and other oils by rail and coal export proposals would result in rail infrastructure expansion into sensitive areas in the Gorge, including wetlands, fish and wildlife habitat, rare plant habitat, and cultural resource sites. These likely impacts must be included in the scope of review.

- Likelihood of accidents. Current coal train traffic in the Gorge has resulted in massive amounts of coal dust escaping the open topped rail cars, which weakens the train ballast and causes accidents. The U.S.
Surface Transportation Board has determined that coal dust is a "pernicious ballast foulant," weakening rail lines and resulting in derailments. The likelihood of oil train derailments, the likely effects on Gorge resources and the impacts on communities must be analyzed.

- Adverse effects to resources protected by the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area Act. The project's indirect and cumulative effects on the scenic, natural, cultural and recreation resources of the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area must be included in the scope of review.

In conclusion, SEPA requires that the EIS address impacts to sensitive or special areas, such as the Columbia River Gorge, and the degree that the proposal would conflict with state, local, and federal protections for the environment, such as the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area Act. WAC 197-11-330(3)(e)(i), (iii). State law also requires the Governor and all state agencies to carry out their respective functions in accordance with the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area Act.
RCW 43.97.025. EFSEC and the Governor are required to review projects for their impacts on the Columbia River Gorge and to take actions to avoid those impacts.

Thank you for considering these comments and including them into the official record.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Sara Mauritz
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