
From: George <aranobilis@earthlink.net>
Sent: Friday, November 15, 2013 8:42 PM
To: EFSEC (UTC)
Subject: Vancouver Oil Terminal proposal comments

Categories: Green

Hello Council,

I spoke at the scoping hearing in Vancouver a few weeks ago. Due to the number of participants, I had to excise some significant portions of what I wished to say. Below is the complete version as I had hoped to present. Thank you again for your time and attention to this very important matter.

Hello. My name is George Jacobs, and for most of my professional life I have been a registered architect, although I no longer practice .

I say that not because I am about to give some sort of architectural critique of this proposal, but rather because when I first learned of it, a few things struck me which relate to the practices of proper development, approval, and construction.

The first is in regards to the meaning and intent of codes, permit processes, and regulation.

People in the building profession are taught that the purpose of codes, laws, and due process are to protect the health, safety and welfare of the general public; the citizens, the everyday users, those who contribute to the functioning of a community and society.

Those proposals which are determined to meet this criteria are allowed to proceed; those which do not, are denied.

The second aspect which jumped out at me about this proposal, was one of scale and proportion. As designers, we have been schooled in the appropriateness of scale and proportion.

Most zoning and planning ordinances in this country take this into account; how appropriate is the particular locality or site for the scale and scope of what is being proposed ? How appropriate is the proposed scale and USE of the facility in light of the surrounding context ?

When one looks at a proposal for a particular operations plant, it is typical to ask for examples, precedents, of other facilities in similarly situated places...and is then fair to examine the track record of such facilities.

Tesoro operates a refinery in Anacortes, one which has a very dark history of repeated violations and fines, many of them categorized as willful....as we all know. It is a facility which has the handling/processing capacity of around 115,000 barrels a day. Oil by rail traffic is approx.. 10 trains weekly.

It is located in a community with a population of 65,000 , measured w/i 15 mile radius of facility, which is how all population centers will be presented in this speech.

There is also a shell refinery in Anacortes which has a capacity of around 60,000 and rail traffic of 12 trains/weekly.

US Oil and Refining has an operation in Tacoma, a more metropolitan center. The facility has a capacity of 39,000 barrels daily, and rail traffic of 7 trains weekly. The population of metropolitan Tacoma and environs, again taken in the same radius to include the environs, is 400,000.

These, in Washington state. If we care to search out Tesoro facilities elsewhere, we can examine Salt Lake City, with a capacity of 58,000 barrels and a population measured via same radius of almost 450,000. Then Martinez, CA, with a capacity of 125,000 barrels and a population center of 300,000 people. Per their website, this is Tesoro's largest facility.

Both, like Anacortes, have received repeated fines and violations over the past few years. In both instances, many of the violations were also categorized as "willful" (meaning Tesoro was aware they were ignoring safety regulations and procedures, and decided to proceed regardless).

This proposed Vancouver facility site sits in the second largest population center of the Pacific Northwest...within a 15-mile radius there lives over 925,000 people. This is between DOUBLE and 15 times the populations of any of the aforementioned facility locations.

This proposal calls for a handling capacity of over **350,000** barrels per day. This is between TRIPLE and 9 times the amount of oil capacity of any other facility in the state, and/or run by Tesoro in other states of the west.

This proposed rail traffic will equal 72 trains weekly. This is between 4x and 10x the amount of rail traffic of any other facility either proposed or in operation.

So, scale and proportion. In both instances, the proposal is completely inappropriate for our population center, and beyond that...the proposal is also completely unprecedented in its scale and scope.

I would put forth that, given the repeated disasters of the past half decade, and Tesoro's abysmal track record, the relationship between capacity of a facility and population center should be inversely proportional. That is, the larger the populated area it sits in, the smaller the facility should be (if it should be allowed at all). In this instance, such a proportionality does not exist.

You do not put a terminal of unprecedented scale where it can **and likely will** cause the most impact and damage.

You have a corporation which has regularly and repeatedly and **willfully failed to safely operate smaller facilities located in much smaller population centers**, now proposing a massive facility in a dense and hugely populated municipality far, far larger than any other location in which they operate.

As a designer or building official, one would call that inappropriate. As just a regular Joe, it's more than fair to say it's a recipe for disaster.

Sincerely,

George Jacobs
Portland