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GUEST OPINION

# Guest Opinion: Experts couldn't answer pipeline questions



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By **Victor Chieco**

Posted Feb. 3, 2015 @ 12:01 am

I, too, attended the public meeting in Medford on Jan. 22 organized by the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality, which included a representative of the Army Corps of Engineers on the panel of officials.

What was encouraging about this meeting was the turnout, which was almost unanimously against the construction of the LNG export pipeline. What was both discouraging and truly frightening was the apparent inability of these professionals to answer the important questions raised by those attending.

It was shocking each time someone asked about the potential destructive impacts of the pipeline and the Jordan Cove export terminal, and the response from those entrusted to protect our waterways was "I don't know." Among many excellent questions, the panel was asked if it knew why both California and Washington had denied permits for this pipeline — the answer was "no."

It would have been comical if it wasn't tragic. Either they didn't expect the audience to have carefully thought about the many issues raised by the construction of a 230-mile pipeline that will cross 400 different waterways and so were taken by surprise, or they truly don't have answers to fundamental questions about how this pipeline will affect water temperature, the drinking water supply, sensitive salmon and trout habitat, silt level, fishing, not to mention a significant contribution to global warming. The issue of the use of eminent domain to take Oregonians' private property for a Canadian company's benefit — not public benefit or use — was one of many subjects beyond the purview of the panel.

And if you think the Army Corps of Engineers only approves well-thought-out projects, just think "Katrina." They have a long history of disastrous projects.

"In a 1952 book, Sen. Paul Douglas noted that 'the Army Corps have never been restrained in estimating the benefits which will result from their projects and ... in recent years have greatly underestimated the costs.' In 2004 a study by Taxpayers for Common Sense (TCS) and the National Wildlife Federation identified 29 of the Corps's projects that they argued would impose environmental damage and waste a total of \$12 billion." (CATO Institute Tax & Budget Bulletin, No. 27, October 2005.) This was true in 1952, in 2005, and is true today.

It behooves all of us who care about our local, state and global environment to get informed about this disastrous project to ship natural gas owned by a private Canadian company along a 230-mile

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pipeline across Oregon to Coos Bay and then to overseas markets via tankers. Written comments must be submitted by 5 p.m. March 13 to: 401 Public Comments, DEQ Eugene Office, 165 E. Seventh Ave., Suite 100, Eugene, OR 97401 or by email to [401publiccomments@deq.state.or.us](mailto:401publiccomments@deq.state.or.us). I urge you to make your voice heard.

Panel members (the first three listed) and others to contact:

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Tyler Krug, US Army Corps of Engineers: [tyler.j.krug@usace.army.mil](mailto:tyler.j.krug@usace.army.mil) 541-756-2097

Heather Wade, Dept. of Land Conservation and Development: [heather.wade@state.or.us](mailto:heather.wade@state.or.us) 503-373-0050 ext. 253

Bob Lobdell, Dept. of State Lands: [Bob.lobdell@state.or.us](mailto:Bob.lobdell@state.or.us) 503-986-5282

And last but not least: Gov. Kitzhaber: 503-378-4582

*Victor Chieco lives in Ashland.*

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