

Letter 12

Responses to Letter 12

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McRae Ranch

November 18, 2003

Dear Commissioners:

I know that this letter will quickly move to the round file in the corner of your office building because my family and I are shadow community members with absolutely no clout to influence the decisions of the "rich and powerful" community members or the politically elite, such as all of you. But in the future when we are breathing from the polluted downwind airshed I will have a little bit of satisfaction that I did write to file a complaint about the Port's decision to partnership in the Wanapa project.

I do have a number of reasons why I strongly object to the Wanapa project and the Port's partnership in the project.

First, that our confiscated property tax dollars will be used to promote the direct benefit of members of another nation without any adherence to all State or Local regulations that similarly sited projects are required to obey. The purchase of the property with our tax dollars, which certainly appears very sleazing after reading all the property transfer deeds, and now local dollars used again for the benefit of the Tribe are just unconsciousable to me.

Second, if the Port wanted to partnership in a carbon based electrical project why did it not do so with the Umatilla Power Project? At least that project would have adhered to all State and Local regulations as well as paid local property taxes and State carbon taxes and still purchased your water, all to the direct benefit of County citizens. The Port would not only have sold the project water, but collected additional property taxes.

Third, as for the water, I cannot believe that there is not an uproar over the proposal that the water goes to another Nation that advocates all dams' removed and complains constantly about any other water use but for salmon. In the past 12 years West Umatilla County has gone from one critical ground water area to 4 such areas. A couple of State regulatory agencies want all development in those 4 areas ceased. In another 12 years the potential is there will be 8 such areas with many more Umatilla County citizens locked out of using their properties as they have dreamed. Why cannot the Port develop a regional water system so those who paid for that water system actually benefit from those taxes they are required to pay the Port instead of a non-tax paying Nation benefiting from the water?

Fourth, my Dad died in October at an early death due to respiratory failure. He had left Umatilla County in the late 1980's because he could no longer breathe the County's air. After examining the Oregon DEQ's latest Air Quality report and then adding the air pollution numbers from the West County carbon based electrical plants to those figures, my wife and I quickly concluded as soon as farming retirement occurred we need to follow our 4 children out of the County to the West to remove ourselves from our downwind home and farm for our own safety. The Port and partners in concert with other agencies have blinders on when it comes to the airshed quality. For me it is ridiculous that no agency supports an area cumulative air quality study. More agencies' head in the sand approach to projects that have been predetermined a go!

Fifth, property taxes not paid by the project. Of course none of you even took the time to attend your own sponsored Wanapa forum where the tax issue was presented. Your absences spoke volumes to me about your lack of concern regarding the project's local impact. The absence also indicated to me that the project was a go for the Port no matter how actual County citizens reacted to the project. The non-participation was another display of the political elitism that appears to be rampant throughout all layers of government.

A shadow resident,

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Letter 12 Continued

COMMENTS RELATED TO DRAFT EIS OF WANAPA PROPOSAL

Directed to Philip Sanchez, Supt. Umatilla Agency BIA POB 520 Pendleton, OR 97801
Submitted by John Spomer, 745 W. Quince, Hermiston, OR

Comments related to information in draft EIS or deletion from same. December 27, 2003.

Briefly noted:

- 12-1 [1. Comparison to an existing coal fired plant hardly seems valid, as it is not likely this plant would be permitted at this time. Furthermore, the existence of a coal-fired plant with considerable emissions into the area air shed argues against other large albeit cleaner generating plants. It would seem prudent to incorporate a plan to phase out the coal-fired plant as a condition before building additional generating plants in this area. To do less, consigns the area to being the high stack electrical generating grounds for the whole of the Northwest.
- 12-2 [2. Little is mentioned in the EIS as to the potential impact on area weather related to numerous steam plumes in a concentrated area.
- 12-3 [3. The absolutely negative impact on the visual image of the Columbia River area is minimized in the EIS. In this area no high profile structure are noted other than a water tower. This plant would be a marked change in the profile of an area that has considerable value related to esthetic and scenic considerations. Not only do you have 4 stacks reaching over 200 feet into the area, but also you add a steam plume reaching several thousand feet high. Also at night you have a light profile that is currently non-existent. This is a dramatic and significant change that is lightly addressed in the DEIS
- 12-4 [4. Nighttime light profile is given very little mention in the DEIS. What type of lighting is to be used? I assume it would be the flashy strobe style lights that have considerable penetration. This impact should be explored fully in the EIS related to impact on both people and wildlife.
- 12-5 [5. The DEIS also seems to a best minimize impact on wildlife in the area. In fact, it almost appears to assume wildlife impact is a most a trivial matter. If I may editorialize, how sad that is as this area was touted by the CTUIR as a major factor when they acquired this property. In fact, I believe one could almost interpret the CTUIR as implying at that time they were saving this unique area for wildlife and its natural beauty. I believe while it is not required in all DEIS documents, in this case it is necessary if not imperative that esthetic and natural value of this land, the rim of the Columbia River, be given considerable weight in determining the value to be derived from this plant versus the negative impact the facility will cause.
- 12-6 [6. The conclusions draw related to the tax issues are very weak in their logic and only seem to reveal an attempt to use the DEIS for propaganda. The BIA would be better served by a more forthright approach. Honesty is still the best policy.

In summary, I think the DEIS is in many ways developed and constructed to lead one to the conclusion that this facility would be of great value with little impact on the area. I urge the BIA to strive to develop a more balance EIS as it moves ahead with this process. In the long run, the BIA and all concerned will be better served if this is done. If the project gets final approval by the BIA and related agencies, it will stand a better chance of acceptance by the area, and at the same time minimize the chance of legal challenges in the future.

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- 12-1 See response to Comment 6-2(c).
- 12-2 This project is 5 miles from other nearby plants. Plumes do not have a radiating boundary that would travel for long distances. Therefore, it would not be expected that there would not be a cumulative effect on weather with the addition of Wanapa in the area.
- 12-3 The Final EIS acknowledges that the new power plant would be a large and visible new feature in the landscape. State of the art and improved lighting towers would be used to minimize the nightly light profile.
- 12-4 The power plant would use shielded lighting, and would be located near the existing prison, which is already well lit at night. Since the stacks would be taller than 200 feet, there would be specific FAA requirements for blinking/strobe lights that would be strictly implemented.
- 12-5 The land acquired by CTUIR was designated for both conservation and industrial uses. The proposed plant site was designated for the proposed industrial use, while the Wanaket Wildlife Management Area would remain under its current uses and management. Certain impacts to the wildlife values and uses were identified in Section 3.4.2.3 (waterfowl collision risk) were identified.
- 12-6 See responses to Comments 6-6, 11-2, and Section 3.10.2.3.