

Resolution Opposing New and Expanded Gas Infrastructure in Washington State

WHEREAS the world's foremost body of climate scientists, the Intergovernmental Panel On Climate Change reports that we have until 2030 to limit global warming to 1.5°C to mitigate devastating worldwide climate impacts such as extreme temperatures, heavy rains, drought, biodiversity loss, ocean acidification, and depletion of freshwater sources;

WHEREAS if we do not take immediate action to radically reduce our emissions in line with the Paris Target of 1.5°C, these climate impacts will intensify, with communities of color, low-income communities, Tribes and coastal communities often being impacted first and worst;

WHEREAS methane has a global warming potential 86 times higher than carbon dioxide over a 20-year period and "natural" gas is comprised of 85-95% methane, and methane leaks from fracking and gas pipelines eliminates the beneficial climate impacts of gas production, and make gas just as bad or worse for the climate compared to coal;

WHEREAS the Interior Department tripled the amount of federal lands leased out for oil and gas parcels in the past fiscal year and simultaneously the EPA rolled back protections for wildlife, air quality, and groundwater supplies, placing the profits of the fossil fuel industry before the health of United States residents;

WHEREAS Washington State is already feeling the impacts of climate change: record-breaking wildfires have devastated our communities and caused toxic air pollution state-wide; snow packs have plummeted, available drinking water and hydroelectric capacity have decreased; salmon and orca populations have become critically endangered; agricultural, fisheries and shellfish industries have suffered billion-dollar losses; and the Quinault Nation has already been forced to relocate two villages because of rising sea levels;

WHEREAS Washington is currently facing multiple proposals for fracked gas mega-projects such as the Kalama methanol refinery and the Tacoma liquefied natural gas (LNG) facility that is currently being built without all required permits on Medicine Creek Treaty Territory and without the Puyallup Tribe's consent and in violation of treaties;

WHEREAS such fracked gas mega-projects undermine Washington's climate leadership and efforts to reduce carbon pollution, and pose staggering health, safety and environmental risks to local communities by causing toxic air and water pollution at every stage of production;

WHEREAS there is a well-documented rise in incidents of violence against indigenous women and women of color in communities near gas extraction sites, including those in British Columbia where the majority of fracked gas consumed in Washington is extracted;

WHEREAS proposed fracked gas projects like the Tacoma LNG facility use non-commercial ratepayer dollars for private gain - 43% of project construction costs are passed on to utility customers, although they will only see 2% of the project's benefit;

WHEREAS in January 2019, King County Council approved a 6-month moratorium on new and expanded fossil fuel infrastructure, joining four other local jurisdictions in Washington, Portland Oregon, Portland Maine and Baltimore Maryland in enacting a *de facto* ban on new fossil fuel infrastructure projects;

WHEREAS investment in major and expanded gas infrastructure and exports will lock us into decades of climate pollution and will divert money from renewable energy development, slowing our essential immediate greenhouse gas reduction and repressing the growth of green jobs in Washington; and

WHEREAS Washington ports serve as a gateway for fossil fuel companies to export gas from the interior of North America to Asian markets, and by opposing new and expanded gas infrastructure Washington can play a critical leadership role in transitioning our global economy to clean energy and keeping fossil fuels in the ground;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that we strongly oppose federal efforts to roll back regulations on gas production, processing, storage and export, especially when those regulatory changes lead to increased health and safety risks for Washington communities;

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we call on the Washington State Department of Ecology to consider a proposed project's complete lifecycle greenhouse gas emissions, including analysis of methane leakage during extraction and transport, and reject permits for any project which would increase emissions;

THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we call for a permanent moratorium on new gas pipelines, processing, and storage facilities in Washington other than maintenance or replacement for safety purposes, and a stop-work order on major projects currently under construction that do not have all their required permits;

THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we call on each and every one of our Washington State and federal representatives to oppose major new and expanded gas infrastructure in WA, including the Kalama methanol refinery and the Tacoma LNG facility; and

THEREFORE, BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that the 46th District Democrats send a copy of this resolution to Governor Inslee, all Democratic State Legislators, and the Washington State Department of Ecology.

Submitted by: Alice Lockhart, PCO SEA 46-2128, originated by 350 Seattle, for consideration by the 46th District Democrats. Date of submission: May 15, 2019.

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