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The Mt. Hood National Forest segment of the Palomar Pipeline

July 24, 2008

Governor Ted Kulongoski
160 State Capitol
900 Court St
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Governor Kulongoski:

Thank you for your recent support of the Oregon Department of Energy's report on the proposed liquefied natural gas (LNG) terminals and connecting pipeline infrastructure. The report validated the concerns of thousands of Oregonians organizing in resistance to these short-sighted proposals.

Unfortunately, this report is not enough to stop LNG from coming into, and through, our state.

Bark joins the farmers, fishermen, land owners and even foresters in pleading that you utilize your full authority to permanently end LNG proposals in Oregon.

Since 1999, Bark has been actively working to protect and restore the ecosystems of Mt. Hood National Forest. Bark represents over 5,000 supporters who share a connection to this land. More than one-third of all Oregonian's water originates from the slopes of Mt. Hood. People from around the world come to witness this rare remaining wild landscape. We take every threat to Mt. Hood's forests as a threat to our air, our water and our way of life. We collaborate with the Forest Service and other agencies when possible, always holding them accountable to the expectation that the public's interest comes before corporate profit.

For ten years, Bark has been a leader in putting the public back into public lands. We do this by encouraging people to get out into their national forest and be a part of monitoring management decisions. In this tradition, for twelve days in June, we did what we do best. **We walked, hiked, climbed, waded and boated the forty miles of this proposed clearcut corridor.**



We used a 50 ft. swatch of fabric as a visual reference for half the width of the clearcut corridor.



Citizens joined the small group of hikers to support their walk across Mt. Hood National Forest

A month ago, 46 people met up with a group of Bark hikers to support their effort to walk the entire segment of the Palomar pipeline crossing Mt. Hood National Forest. They also came to bear witness to the forests, as they stand today. Many of these people had learned about LNG and the Palomar Pipeline through the news. Some had learned about it through a letter informing them of the eminent domain process. Most had seen maps of the proposed

route, a benign stripe laid over the well-known features of Mt. Hood's foothills. However, it was not until we walked along the Pacific Crest Trail and turned into another old-growth forest that all of us became aware of what we stand to lose by the Palomar Pipeline -- more of our ancient forest ecosystems for a bargain price.

It has been a year since Bark joined with the dozens of citizen groups on the coast and along the pipeline routes, fighting to be heard. When we first looked at the maps for the Palomar pipeline, it was like looking into a keepsake box of Bark's history. Approximately 40 miles of the pipeline crosses Mt. Hood National Forest. It passes through logging projects we stopped and logging projects we lost. It will need the logging roads that we successfully lobbied Congress for money to properly remove after decades of degrading integral watersheds. It crosses over trails we go to when we need inspiration and reminder of our infancy in the natural world. And it will cross streams, creeks and rivers, systems we depend on for our drinking water. This is where Bark draws the line; **no one should ever have to be asked to risk their access to clean drinking water for corporate profit.**

Bark's vision is to bring about a transformation of Mt. Hood National Forest into a place where natural processes prevail, where wildlife thrives and where local communities have a social, cultural and economic investment in its restoration and preservation.

This pipeline has an impact on hundreds of landowners. But when you consider the impacts of crossing public lands, the affected communities become a whole lot bigger. Due in part to the election coverage, domestic and alternative energy supply issues are making news nearly everyday. Although public outcry is beginning to have a considerable impact on the direction for the extractive energy supply industry, the issue of using public lands for energy needs must be uniquely considered in this debate. Currently, a proposal for other energy corridors throughout the western United States on federal public lands crossing over eleven states is going through review. As infrastructure is needed for a changing energy supply, the issue of if and how the national forest system plays into the risks and needs analysis will become not only relevant, but pivotal to the success of some of the proposed solutions.

Right now, Mt. Hood National Forest is just one of the many swaths of public lands seen as a domestic energy supply and transmission opportunity. Adding to the hydropower infrastructure are proposals for biomass and geothermal. With each new project, comes removal of forestlands already denuded by decades of mismanagement, but currently offering valuable carbon sequestration. **At what point is the use of our public lands to supply the energy industry not worth the risks to our ecosystems and their recovery? Which vital assets are we willing to sacrifice?**

These are not questions that can be answered standing over a map. We value the knowledge gained by getting out into the forest and seeing for ourselves what is at stake. So what did we see on our 12-day hike along the proposed route of the Palomar Pipeline through Mt. Hood National Forest?



Fish Creek

FISH CREEK

Fish Creek is home to one of the most successful road decommissioning projects in the Pacific Northwest. After flooding in 1994 caused massive damage to the aging road system along the Fish Creek basin, depositing huge sediment loads into the Clackamas River, the Forest Service was forced to choose between adding to the growing backlog of maintenance or permanently remove the financial burden of over 100 miles of deteriorating roads. For over a decade, the Fish Creek area has been left to recover the steep cutslopes of road beds. Absent of culverts, creeks and streams have begun to redefine their natural paths, native shrubbery reinforcing

the banks of the waterways. Until recently, access to the fishing holes upstream had been left to those on foot. **But now the Palomar Pipeline threatens to clearcut through the basin, bringing roads for construction and long-term access back to the Fish Creek Basin.**

Just last month at the Western Governor's Association, a policy resolution *Restoring and Maintaining a Sustainable Road System on National Forest Lands* was established, stating "The capacity of our National Forests to provide clean water is diminished because of deteriorating roads that pollute streams with sediment." In addition, for several years now, Bark has used the issue of roads and the backlog of maintenance that plagues the Forest Service budget as common ground to build trust between environmentalists, recreationalists and the agency. As we continue to invest major resources into avoiding the destructive consequences of an aging road system under the strain of increased storm activity from climate changes, we cannot afford the risks of these landscape level projects. **The Palomar Pipeline threatens this tenuous relationship between diverse stakeholders to implement real restoration work in Mt. Hood.**



Using a two picture montage of LSR forests along the Clackamas River, we can see the whole width of the proposed clearcut corridor

CLACKAMAS RIVER

Where the Palomar Pipeline crosses the Clackamas River the forests are designated Late-Successional Reserves (LSR). The forests of the Clackamas River Basin are some of the rare, remaining old-growth stands on the westside of Mt. Hood. In 1994, the Northwest Forest Plan identified these forests as current or potential old-growth forests that provide much-needed habitat to species dependent on decadent tree stands. Today, LSRs remain as islands of healthy forests. LSR forests are a benchmark in public lands history. They represent essential trust-building between environmentalists and the federal agencies acting on behalf of the public's interests.

By clearcutting through LSR in the name of energy company profits, the Palomar Pipeline threatens more than just old growth forests.

The course of the proposed pipeline route across the Clackamas River exemplifies the majestic qualities of the river. Forty-seven miles of the Clackamas in Mt. Hood is designated a Wild and Scenic River Corridor and for obvious reasons. Old-growth forests push up against the banks, hundreds of years of usnea and lichen progress hanging from branches, carelessly swaying in the wind. The river rocks that have piled up on the beach display Mt. Hood's diverse geology, smoothed by regular, seasonal flooding. A side channel extends out from the rush of the main river, shaded by a grove of red alders and providing ideal, slow-moving spawning grounds for the late winter run of the threatened coho salmon. Birds of prey soar overhead, perching on two-hundred foot snags. Dippers, killdeer, mergansers and other waterbirds skim above the rapids. **We cannot lose this vital ecosystem.**

SOLO TIMBER SALE

The proposed Palomar Pipeline route clearcuts through the units of a once controversial old-growth timber sale. The proposed logging was found to be illegal by the courts and was never cut. Today, the trees stand as a reminder of how far we have come from the days of controversy over old-growth logging. Last year, the courts found the last remaining old-growth timber sale on Mt. Hood National Forest, Slinky, also to be illegal. And today, Bark and other citizen watchdog groups are able to use

persistent public involvement to work with the Forest Service as we revision our national forest's priorities and incentives away from destructive logging and towards restoration of the remaining wild places. **Our community will not allow old-growth logging in Mt. Hood National Forest.**

As Martin Evans said in a letter to you after hiking the pipeline, "If this project were proposed as a timber harvest, it would be illegal. Why should we hold a natural gas company to a different standard?"



Threatened tree on the pipeline route

TIMOTHY LAKE

The Palomar Pipeline route would travel through the Timothy Lake recreation area, crossing over the trail system. This includes the nationally-recognized Pacific Crest Historic Trail, connecting 2,600 miles from Mexico to Canada. When we reached the Timothy Lake area, we invited people to come out and join our hike for a few days. Timothy Lake is one of the most popular recreation destinations in Mt. Hood, enticing hundreds of families each summer to the headwaters of the Oak Grove Fork of the Clackamas. The area also marks the transition zone from

the wet, westside forests to the drier, eastside of the Cascades. The species diversity creates a dynamic ecosystem that attracts people year after year.

The proposed route for the Palomar Pipeline follows north past Timothy Lake, taking a sharp turn east towards McCubbins Gulch, avoiding ever crossing the Warm Springs Reservation. **Despite this, the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs have expressed concerns over the route.** The route makes its way east, never more than a quarter mile from the boundary of the reservation. In addition to the concerns Warm Springs shares with us about cumulative impacts to fish, the increasing presence of off-highway vehicles (OHV) in the national forest has raised conflicts with "off-forest" holdings.



Citizens hiking on the Pacific Crest Historic Trail to the Palomar Pipeline crossing

Candace Larson wrote after returning from the section of the pipeline route that climbs out of the Clear Creek watershed and eventually through an old timber sale, "Who knew that the eastside of Mt. Hood even held a quarter mile long slope entirely covered in a perennial wetland of huge cedars and skunk cabbage bogs and thick yew trees? The damage to this slope from clearcutting will obviously be atrocious...It's bad

enough to visit a {timber} sale like Hilynix as its own sort of forest disaster story--giant slash piles and a few desperate leave trees in a desiccated landscape--but to walk through it on the same trajectory and within an hour of climbing up through that amazing, mature cedar forest was really jarring.”

McCUBBINS GULCH

The pipeline route poses continued concern for the growing abuse of public lands by off-road vehicles. **The Palomar Pipeline proposal threatens quiet recreation in national forest, while encouraging illegal off-road vehicle use and resource destruction.**

Currently, McCubbins Gulch has routes that are designated for OHVs, including some routes under existing powerline corridors. After years of trying to disperse the use, the Forest Service has recently moved towards a containment solution, designating large tracks of lands and roads to be open to off-roading, while the rest of the national forest is closed to this type of use. There has been no increase in law enforcement and trail development to entice riders is often resulted from ongoing user-created trails being enveloped into the allowed use, rather than discouraged.



One of the few remaining native stands of forest in McCubbins Gulch

Jim Denton, another hiker from near Hood River, wrote, “I think the thing that hits me the most from having followed a compass bearing through the forest is how marginal the forest has become. It is a long way from being anything close to multiple-use. Logging has made the forest into a land without users. Animals don't like it. Hunters don't like it, nor does virtually any other group, except for maybe the ATV crowd.”

WHAT CAN YOU DO NOW?

The national forest system in Oregon needs to be a part of our state’s long-term planning for energy supply and transmission. We ask that you work with the Forest Service, the Bureau of Land Management and other land management agencies to ensure that all public lands is an asset to Oregonians first.

- 1. Stop all new energy speculating on Mt. Hood National Forest until the management plan is revised and implemented**

Every national forest has a Land Resource Management Plan (LRMP) and Mt. Hood’s is eighteen years old and almost four years overdue for a review and revision. From

communications with the Forest Service, we understand that this effort will be underway in 2012. The LRMP sets the standards and guidelines for all actions in Mt. Hood. Bark sees the revision of this document as an opportunity to reassess the priorities of our public lands.

2. Oppose LNG and uphold Oregon's "green" values and reputation

Under your administration, Oregon has deepened its reputation as a leader in the sustainable living movement. People are moving here to be inspired and participate in a culture of progressive thinking and personal accountability. Oregonians want to see leadership in our state represent these values. Oregonians want to see enterprising policy-making. This is why it has been easy for Oregonians to see that LNG does not belong in our state.

Governor Kulongoski, please join us in opposing LNG!

3. We would like to invite you to join us on a hike into Mt. Hood National Forest to see the proposed path of the clearcut corridor. I will follow up with your office in the coming weeks to find a time that we may take a field trip out to the route. We feel certain that your time would be well spent witnessing these forests as they stand today!

Thank you for taking a moment to learn about Bark's efforts to protect Mt. Hood National Forest now and for the future. Please contact us with any questions.

Sincerely,

Amy Harwood
Program Director
Bark

P.S. Please accept these letters and postcards from people who came to join us on Hike the Pipe! We are counting on your support to keep LNG from coming in and through our state, putting thousands of Oregonians at risk and threatening our ecosystems.

cc:

Secretary of State Bill Bradbury
Treasurer Randall Edwards
Senator Kate Brown
Senator Ben Westlund
Mt. Hood National Forest
Federal Energy Regulatory Commission

Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife
Clackamas County Commissioners
Clackamas Soil and Water
Conservation District
Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs

