

Vancouver, WA City Council Extends Moratorium on Large-Scale Fossil Fuel Facilities

July 21, 2020 (VANCOUVER, WA)— On Monday July 20, after receiving overwhelmingly supportive testimony from Vancouver residents in two consecutive public hearings, the Vancouver City Council voted unanimously to extend its moratorium on large-scale fossil fuel facilities in the City of Vancouver. During the City Council’s meetings in July, dozens of local residents testified in support of the moratorium praising the City’s efforts to protect the city from polluting projects that pose health and safety risks for Vancouver neighborhoods.

“In 2018, Vancouver said No to an oil terminal. On Monday, they said No to increasing the number of dangerous trains speeding through the neighborhoods. They said No to adding more health-harming and global-warming pollutants to the air,” said **Alona Steinke**, a retired nurse and volunteer with the **Sierra Club’s Beyond Fossil Fuel Task Force in Vancouver**. “Safety is not the only reason to limit the transport and use of fossil fuels. It’s also a public health issue. Vancouver made it clear that the health and safety of their neighborhoods is more important than the economic health of a dirty industry.”

The City of Vancouver’s policy specifically focuses on very large facilities while exempting small distribution businesses, like local gas stations.

The moratorium will remain in effect for six months, and can be extended again if necessary. The City plans to use the pause earned by the moratorium to study and develop a more permanent policy to address large-scale fossil fuel facilities as well as other climate change and resilience policies for the City of Vancouver.

“I fully support the moratorium. It’s exactly where we need to go,” said **Monica Zazueta**, a member of the local **Vancouver Sunrise Movement**. “I’m motivated thinking about my young son’s future, and I want us to do everything to ensure that he has one. The decisions we are making today will impact my son’s future directly.”

At today’s hearing, members of the Alliance for Community Engagement and its participating groups including the Vancouver Sunrise Movement, Columbia Riverkeeper, Physicians for Social Responsibility, Sierra Club Beyond Fossil Fuels Task Force, and Washington Environmental Council voiced their hope that the City would ultimately make the restriction on large-scale fossil fuel facilities permanent, expanding on Vancouver’s existing ordinance prohibiting large oil refineries and oil train terminals. The policy is part of a region-wide trend of local jurisdictions passing ordinances that protect neighborhoods from health and safety risks from fossil fuel facilities.

“Across the region, we are inspired to see local governments like the Vancouver city Council finding ways to protect the health and safety of their communities where the federal government has been unsuccessful, or counter-productive” said **Rebecca Ponzio**, Climate and Fossil Fuel Program Director for **Washington Environmental Council**. “In Tacoma, Portland, King County, Whatcom County, and Vancouver, local leaders are taking concrete steps to ensure that new mega-fossil fuel terminals don’t threaten our communities with toxic pollution and staggering quantities of climate-changing greenhouse gases.”

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