

JERRY OLIVER TALKING POINTS – VANCOUVER CITY COUNCIL

(409 words – approximately 3 minutes)

Good evening. Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

It's been a long night already, so I will be brief. My name is Jerry Oliver and I serve as a publically elected commissioner for the Port of Vancouver USA.

Much has been shared here tonight, both from project supporters and opponents – as well as those who are simply concerned with the precedent you're setting by considering this resolution.

I'd like to comment on a larger topic: leadership.

Those of you who know me well, know I'm an optimist. I'm proud that our nation was built by leaders who, when faced with problems, pulled together and figured out how to fix them. They didn't bury their heads in the sand and pretend that those problems didn't exist – which is what I believe this resolution does.

Leaders like George Marshall who saw a path to peace by rebuilding a battered enemy. Leaders like Dwight David Eisenhower who saw the path to prosperity by building the interstate highway system. Leaders like Lyndon Baines Johnson who saw the path to ensure the blessings of liberty to all Americans was to cast aside his Jim Crow heritage and pass the voting rights bill of 1964. They didn't bury their heads in the sand and pretend those problems didn't exist—which is what I believe this resolution does.

It ignores the fact that crude oil trains are traveling through our community now and will continue to do so regardless of whether or not a handling facility is located at our port. It ignores that as a nation we send our young men and women and billions of dollars overseas to fight wars in regions of the world that control our access to oil. It ignores the need to find a reliable source of U.S. oil that allows us to make the gradual, but necessary, transition to a more balanced energy platform founded on renewables. And it ignores the need to strengthen our nation by putting our people back to work and rebuilding our nation's infrastructure.

As I see it, a yes vote on this resolution says – we can't do it. We can't figure out how to move this product safely. We can't put the appropriate regulations in place. We can't find a way to do both – create livability and economic vitality.

We're saying that we have no faith in the creative, inventive, problem-solving skills of this nation's people. Instead, we just want to say no – this is too hard – let's just convince ourselves that we're doing the right thing – the noble thing – by saying no, not this community. Let someone else figure this out. It's not our problem.

It makes me sad. Not so much that you're opposing a project at the Port of Vancouver, your economic development partner for more than a century, but that we have so little vision – or faith in our ability to make good things happen.

I ask that you do not vote on this resolution. Thank you.