

Greater Grays Harbor Inc Supports Crude Oil Exports in Western Washington

Local News

Posted by: David Haviland

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ABERDEEN, Wash. - The board of Greater Grays Harbor, Inc. has voted unanimously to support three proposed Crude By Rail projects at the Port of Grays Harbor at its March meeting. Citing years of incident-free marine bulk liquid storage and shipping at the Port, extensive regulations, and the prospect of hundreds of direct and indirect jobs created in the long and short term of the projects, the board enthusiastically backed the projects proposed by Imperium Grays Harbor, Westway Terminals and U.S. Development. Board members were further convinced to support the projects when told of anticipated improvements to the railroad, particularly at the Olympic Gateway Mall area, which will not only ameliorate existing impacts from rail traffic, but improve the rail line for increased use for years to come. "Our board believes that supporting both current and future Grays Harbor business is a winner for Grays Harbor," said Larry Kahl, board chair. "The current Crude by Rail proposal means new, family-wage jobs at companies that are proven to handle bulk liquid storage and shipping safely, and it creates an investment in our rail line that will create economic growth at our Port for decades into the future. It is a win for our community and economy."

The board also addressed concerns that the projects could be detrimental to the environment. "Rail, oil and maritime shipping are three of the most substantially regulated industries in the nation and in our state," Mike O'Dell, Vice Chair said. "We believe that those protections will serve the Harbor, and already have in the case of Imperium and Westway. If we felt there was truly a conflict between this industry and tourism, or commercial fishing or shell fishing, we would not have supported Crude by Rail." The board also noted that there are successful Crude By Rail shipping facilities at the Port of Tacoma and along the Columbia River. "This is not a new business model," Kahl added. Anyone who is interested in learning more about the Crude By Rail project is invited to attend the Business Forum Luncheon, from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. Tuesday, April 23, at the Aberdeen Elks. Representatives from Westway and Imperium will be on hand to present and answer questions. Reservations are mandatory, and are \$15 for members who RSVP by April 19, \$20 for non-members. Lunch is included. Call 532-1924 for reservations.