



## Your View: Jordan Cove quake risks ignored at our peril

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The most shocking fact about earthquake and tsunami risks on the coast of Oregon is their inevitability. We buy fire insurance — spending good money though our house is unlikely to burn. Meanwhile, the geologic record indicates beyond scientific doubt that a major tremor and Fukushima-style tidal wave is due. And it's going to be the big one. The really big one — many times greater than the infamous 1906 San Francisco disaster. All credible science indicates that a major event approaching or exceeding magnitude 9 at Coos Bay has a return cycle of 243 years. The last one was 315 years ago. We're not just due; we're overdue.

For a chilling account of our seismic fate, see the article that many Northwesterners are talking about: the July 20 *New Yorker* (just Google The Really Big One).

As an Oregonian who lives in the danger zone, I have to say that denial is our most common MO. We hope it won't happen. But taking a personal risk, with knowledge of the consequences, is one thing, and taking a public gamble by forcing the entire community and region to be at risk is quite another.

That's what Coos County has been doing by delaying planning based on modern hazard maps. The State Department of Geology and Mineral Industries provided the maps to the county three years ago. They clearly define the area of the LNG proposal as a "hazard" zone. The inevitable earthquake and tsunami will shatter and pound at full force directly on the LNG site with its tanks, tankers, and pipelines loaded with one of the most explosive and flammable substances known.

According to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission's Draft Environmental Impact Statement, nearly 17,000 people live or work in the project's hazardous "zones of concern." Picturing the outcome of a tidal wave at Jordan Cove doesn't require much imagination; just look to Fukushima in 2011.

We all make personal decisions to live in areas of known danger and — at least until it happens — we think the risk is worth it. But the LNG facility puts many thousands of people at far greater risk. Why would this be worth the cost?

After the short-term building boom, project boosters claim that 146 LNG jobs will result. Even if that number is accurate, it's only one-third the number that work at the Mill Casino, posing no danger to those around them.

The other reason for Jordan Cove's risk is the export of natural gas. Export. We might have all been persuaded by the drive for "energy independence" that has justified fossil fuel development for 40 years across America. But now, at Jordan Cove, our own resources will be depleted in order to fuel China's rise in the world economy. Export of American fuel is not good for America. It's only good for the corporations selling the gas.

After the inevitable disaster, everyone will say that we should have known better, that the officials on our watch shirked their responsibility, that the risks we all shouldered to make the gas industry richer were not worth the cost.

Goal 7 of the Oregon state land-use law requires "prohibiting the siting of ... hazardous facilities ... in identified hazard areas, where risk to public safety cannot be mitigated." The fact that the Department of Land Conservation and Development has not issued a "rule" for administering this goal does not annul the fact that one of the most hazardous facilities possible is being planned for the most hazardous landscape in America.

The hazard maps are unambiguous. After several years of LNG preparations, the county finally adopted the maps on July 30. Yet their use of the map was placed on a one-year delay. The Goal 7 directive remains unaddressed.

Some risks are necessary, and worth the cost. This one is not.

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